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Pictures

OF

OLD ENGLAND.

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BY DR. REINHOLD PAULI,

AUTHOR OF "HISTORY OF ALFRED THE GREAT," ETC.

TRANSLATED WITH THE AUTHOR'S SANCTION,

BY E. C. OTTÉ.

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TO

BENJAMIN THORPE, ESQ.

ONE OF THE MOST LEARNED CULTIVATORS

OF THE ANCIENT HISTORY AND LANGUAGE OF ENGLAND

The following Pages are Dedicated

WITH EVERY FEELING OF SINCERE REGARD

AND ESTEEM

BY

THE TRANSLATOR.

PREFACE TO THE TRANSLATION.

THE following "Pictures of Old England" were originally sketched by the author, with the view of more clearly illustrating to his own countrymen his "History of England in the Middle Ages,"* a work that is admitted by all who are capable of forming an opinion on the question, to be characterized by impartial truthfulness and by indefatigable industry in the research of minute documentary evidence. The materials which were necessarily accumulated by Dr. Pauli during the progress of such a composition, afforded him the ready means of elaborating, in a popular form, this series of vivid sketches of the men and institutions of the good old times in the days of the Plantagenets. It will be

* Geschichte von England, vols. III. IV. V. Hamburg u. Gotha, 1853, 1855, 1858. These volumes are a continuation of Dr. Lappenberg's work, which has been translated, with additions and corrections, by Mr. Thorpe, under the titles of "A History of England under the Anglo-Saxon Kings," 2 vols. 1845; and "A History of England under the Norman Kings," 1857.

readily seen that one of the principal objects aimed at by the author, has been to bring prominently forward the early intercourse which existed between England and Germany; while he has endeavoured *con amore* to illustrate some of the sources and channels through which the history and social progress of our own country have been modified and influenced by the German element.

The value of the present translation has been much increased by the careful supervision of the learned author, whose accurate knowledge of English has enabled him to suggest many important emendations.

The following is a list, drawn up by Dr. Pauli himself, of the various authorities which he has consulted in the composition of the several chapters:—

CHAPTER I.—Historical Memorials of Canterbury, by A. P. Stanley, London, 1855. Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, a Biography, by J. C. Robertson. London, 1860.

II.—Chronica Jocelini de Brakelonda, Camden Society, 1840. Chronica Monasterii de Abingdon, ed. Stevenson, 2 vols. Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores, 1858. Monumenta Fraciscana, ed. Brewer, Rer. Brit. Med. Aevi Script. 1858 (the new collection published under the direction of the Master of the Rolls).

III.—Modus tenendi Parliamentum, ed. Hardy, 1848. Gneist Das heutige Englische Verfassungs und Verwaltungsrecht, vol. I. Berlin, 1857.

IV.—A number of documents, formerly preserved in the Tower of London, at present in the Public Record Office, having either been

written from Germany, or referring to German affairs during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, were copied or extracted by the author under the direction of the Royal Academy of Sciences at Berlin, to which also a report, accompanying nearly 500 pieces, was addressed. The details regarding the Prussian Crusade of Henry, Earl of Derby, in the year 1390–1, are taken from the original account-book, which is still preserved among the records of the Duchy of Lancaster.

V.—Besides the Geschichte von England, vol. IV. a Wardrobe Account-book of King Edward III. A.D. 1338–40, in the Public Record Office, is principally referred to, extracts from which have been printed by the author in Quellen und Erörterungen zur Bayerischen und Deutschen Geschichte, vol. VII. Munich, 1858.

VI.—J. M. Lappenberg, Urkundliche Geschichte des Hansischen Stahlhofes zu London, Hamburg, 1851; with a great number of English and German documents.

VII.—The Poetical Works of Geoffrey Chaucer. London, W. Pickering, 1845, 6 vols. Confessio Amantis of John Gower, ed. Dr. R. Pauli. London, Bell and Daldy, 1857, 3 vols.

VIII.—Vaughan, John Wiclif, a Monograph. London, 1853. Lechler, Wiclif und die Lollarden, in Niedner's Zeitschrift für die historische Theologie, 1853. Fasciculus Zizaniorum Magistri Johannis Wyclif, ed. Shirley, Rer. Brit. Med. Aevi Script. 1858.

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X.—J. Quicherat, Procès de Condamnation et Réhabilitation de Jeanne d'Arc, etc. 5 vols. Paris, 1841-1849, ed. Société de l'Histoire de France.

XI.—The author's continuation of Geschichte von England, vol. V.

XII.—Munimenta Gildhallæ Londoniensis, vol. I. Liber Albus, A.D. 1419, ed. Riley, Rer. Brit. Med. Aevi Script. 1859.

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LONDON IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

I.

CANTERBURY,

AND

THE WORSHIP OF ST. THOMAS BECKET.

THE modern capital of a kingdom is not always the spot from whence its earliest civilization has emanated. Either two cities have, from their origin, contended for supremacy, as was the case with Rome and Alba Longa, or, more frequently, one has been thrown into the shade by the other, after having for ages maintained an undisputed ascendancy. Toledo existed long before Madrid; Brandenburg long before Berlin. Even London, which Nature seems to have destined to be the metropolis of the empire, the chief port of the country, and the commercial emporium of the whole world, has not always been without a rival in regard to every province of material power. The Romans, when they opened Britain to the knowledge of the rest of the world and brought it within the pale of communion with other nations, found this spot conspicuous in the fresh beauty of its noble site; and this pre-eminence it maintained throughout the wild and gloomy storms that swept over the nation during the next few centuries. In

regard to one point, however—and that a point of paramount importance—London was compelled to yield to a neighbouring spot, to which appertains a higher honour, and to which the civilization of England, and we may almost say of the entire world, will ever owe a large debt of gratitude. The ancient Durovernum, which was in existence when the Romans began to organize their conquests, was even then an important intermediate station on the great road which led from the sea-coast to the city on the Thames; but it was not until a people of different race had changed its name to Canterbury, and established at once a kingdom and a royal residence on the banks of the Stour, that its fortunes experienced any essential alteration. We have no intention to enter into a dissertation, however brief, on the history of the ancient city of Canterbury, for our purpose is merely to speak of two events, and of two historical characters, intimately connected with the celebrity and interest which this spot has claimed from the earliest ages in the pages of history.

The stranger, who in the present day is borne rapidly along the railway through the slopes and luxuriant hop-gardens of Kent, cannot fail to be struck by the air of antiquity that meets him as he draws near to the ancient city. A low and heavy gateway, which seems to belong to the fifteenth century, leads him into the streets of Canterbury. Below the ramparts, which have been converted into public walks, the foundation-stones of the old fortifications may still be traced; and at one spot, at least, we meet with the remains of an ancient royal residence. We next come to extensive ecclesiastical buildings, which are here and there in ruins, but which

more generally retain their original form, fulfilling, even at the present day, the object for which they were designed. High above gate and tower, and walls and gabled roofs, rises the carefully-preserved mother-church of England—the stately Cathedral—conspicuous for its pointed and crenellated towers and its far-stretching nave, with its double choir, elevated above the rest of the building, and extending far eastward. Like the cathedral at Cologne, the Canterbury Minster is visible from a considerable distance before any of the rest of the town can be seen; and the fantastic outlines of its white stone walls stand forth from the clear sky with an almost unnatural brightness. It is, moreover, the principal object of attraction in the district—the spot to which, even in ages long passed, there resorted from every part crowds of eager spectators. Canterbury, which is still the chief archiepiscopal see of the island, is also the most ancient site of Catholic Christianity in England—the mother-seat of her Church and her civilization.

It is well known that the Britons, after they had become Roman subjects, received, at one time, a form of Christianity, which was probably brought to them direct from the East, since at that period, no primate had as yet been settled at Rome as the head of the Western Church. It is equally familiar to all that the British island was, in turn, conquered by pagan Jutes, Saxons, and Angles — tribes belonging to vigorous Germanic races—that the bonds with which Rome had once bound the island to the Continent were thus rent asunder, and that the knowledge of Christianity was almost entirely eradicated from the land, except in a few places,

where a feeble spark of the true faith was still kept alive among the Celtic inhabitants. Alike well known is the tale that, a hundred and fifty years afterwards, Gregory the Great, having been moved by the sight of some fair curly-headed English youths in the slave-market at Rome, and touched by their beauty, had formed the wish of converting their countrymen—the insular Saxons —to the true faith; and that when he soon afterwards ascended the papal throne, he sent forth a faithful and trustworthy delegate to perform this holy labour in his place. His envoy, together with those who accompanied and succeeded him in this great work, was rewarded by the noblest success; and it was by means of converted Anglo-Saxons, among whom stand conspicuous such names as Wilfrid, Willibrord, Winfrid, and Willehead, that Germany was subsequently brought within the pale of Roman Catholic Christianity, and a portion of the debt of gratitude thus nobly paid, which the converted nations owed to their kindred tribes on the Continent. It is, however, more especially to Augustine, the apostle of Gregory, that the archiepiscopal see of Canterbury owes the indelible character which has clung to it to the present day.

This Augustine, who was probably named after the great father of the Church—St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo-Regius—was a monk of the monastery of St. Andrew, on the Cœlian Mount, to which Gregory had also belonged. From the cell, in which his hours were spent in the study of the Bible and in the devotional exercises prescribed by the rules of his house, he must often have looked down upon the still magnificent ruins of imperial Rome. The destructive barbarism of her

Germanic assailants had not been able utterly to annihilate the glorious creations of the noblest arts of antiquity; and pagan temples were now being converted into Christian churches, while the intellectual products of the genius of the nobly-gifted heathens of old were being collected, preserved, and adapted to the use of these Christian fanes. In the midst of a world full of vigorous rudeness, filled with marvellous ruins and permeated by contending elements, within which, however, there slumbered the most marvellous germs of vitality, the Romish hierarchy in those days slowly, but steadily, acquired a solid and compact form. The minds of Gregory and of his delegate must have been nurtured and ennobled by the thoughts and memories that clung to this varied and almost chaotic state of existence, and it was reserved for the latter to transfer them to the remote shores of Britain.

It was in the year 596 that Augustine, a man of noble and almost athletic figure, issued forth from the gates of his monastery, accompanied by forty monks. The terror of the long journey, and the discouragement produced by reports of the horrible barbarism of the savages to whom they had been sent, had well-nigh made the travellers turn back when they reached the mouth of the Rhone, had not the Pope, who remained firm to his purpose, encouraged them to persevere. After they had traversed the whole of Gaul, and reached the sea-coast, they crossed from the territories of the Morini to the shores of Kent, and landed on the Isle of Thanet, which was, at that time, entirely surrounded by water, at a place named then, as it still is, Ebbe's Fleet, and not far from those memorable spots, which have been so intimately associated with the history and destiny of

England through the landing of Julius Cæsar, of the heroic brothers Hengist and Horsa, and of William Duke of Normandy. The narrowness of the channel at this part of the coast, which is here sheltered by chalk cliffs and deep land-locked bays, naturally gave occasion to such a preference.

Augustine had, moreover, a special reason for selecting this small island as the place of his disembarkation; for he had to provide for his own safety, and that of his followers, until he could obtain the necessary information in regard to the disposition of Ethelbert, the Æscing, who was at that time the ruler of Kent. He and his subjects, like all the other Saxon princes and inhabitants of England, were still heathens; although he must have been regarded as the most distinguished among the pagan rulers, since he exercised a sort of suzerainship over all the others, while his power extended as far as the Humber. He had, however, as the Pope had long since heard, married Bertha, a Merovingian princess of the race of Clovis, who was permitted by this tolerant worshipper of Woden to exercise her orthodox faith without hindrance, and who had even been suffered to bring with her, as her chaplain, a Christian countryman of her own, Bishop Ludhard, who, as Bede circumstantially relates, was allowed to perform mass in her presence in a small chapel in the eastern part of Canterbury. Arrangements for the first meeting with the king were speedily settled, and without further delay, the conference took place on the small island, and in the open air—a precaution insisted upon by the men of Kent, from the fear that the foreign strangers might make use of certain charms or spells. The prince, attended by his

haughty followers, all of whom were armed, took his seat beneath an ancient oak, where he awaited the approach of the monks, who advanced towards him, preceded by two of their number bearing aloft a silver cross and a picture of the Saviour, painted on a golden ground. The interview was carried on by help of interpreters, who, after announcing the message of Augustine, repeated the answer of the Æscing prince, who expressed a true-hearted confidence in the good intentions of his new acquaintance, to whom he accorded the most hospitable welcome. Soon after this, the monks proceeded on their way to Canterbury, which they entered, singing aloud the "Halleluia" in one of the chants of praise that had been composed by Gregory.

The wife, in this case, as has so often happened both in ancient and modern times, was the principal agent in the conversion of her husband; and the strange guests had not long recovered from the fatigues of their travels, and had only lately begun to celebrate the services of their Church within Queen Bertha's chapel, when the king caused them to be informed that he was disposed to adopt their faith. All his thoughts had been turned to that consecrated spot of ground outside the city gate, where, even in the present day, there still stands, in the midst of its ancient burying-ground, the small church of St. Martin, and where, according to Bede, a church had been founded by the early British Christians during the time of the Roman occupation of the island, although it is very probable that it received the name of the saint of Tours from its subsequent connexion with the Frankish princess. Here, on the only piece of ground that had remained consecrated to Christian worship,

Ethelbert was baptized by Augustine on the 2d of June, in the year 597—a day that has been conscientiously and gratefully incorporated by the Saxons in their calendar. The building from which this victory of Romish orthodoxy extended over the north of Europe, although small and unimposing, was of a peculiar character, and well worthy of arresting the attention of the spectator. On a singularly formed hill, which, in the dark ages, had undoubtedly served as a place of sacrifice for the Celtic Druids, and where probably, in after times, Jutes and Saxons had invoked their gods, Thor and Woden, stand the ancient and strong foundation walls of a building of small dimensions, scarcely larger than many a private burying vault or pilgrim's chapel. Roman bricks project between the stones, and these very stones were probably the witnesses of that world-renowned and most important ceremony of baptism, which in its results, was nearly as momentous an event as the conversion of Constantine the Great, or of Clovis, the Franco-Gallic prince. We are scarcely disposed, however, to grant that the remarkable font, which, at most, can only be referred to the later Saxon period, is the identical one employed by Augustine on this memorable occasion. It is sufficient for us that the spot where the first Anglo-Saxon prince became a Christian is as thoroughly and satisfactorily authenticated as the site where once stood the Capitol of ancient Rome. To the present time the church of St. Martin-in-the-East has fulfilled its destination of serving as a parish church to the suburbs of Canterbury.

The diffusion of Christianity, like the progress of civilization generally, has usually followed a western direc-

tion; and this tendency may be traced even in regard to details in the ruined buildings of Canterbury. A short distance outside the city walls rises another elevation, on which the ruins of an ecclesiastical building project from the soil. Ancient histories and more recent traditions record that here, long before the arrival of Augustine, had stood an ancient British Christian temple, in which the Saxons, at a subsequent period, worshipped their gods. The building was now given by the converted king to the bishop, who dedicated it to St. Pancras. He had selected for the patron-saint of his church the youthful martyr who had been put to death for his faith during the persecutions under the Emperor Diocletian, in order that, by the selection of this saint, he might keep in memory the spot where he had himself lived for so long a time at Rome; for the monastery of St. Andrew was situated on the ground which had once been the property of the noble family to which St. Pancras belonged. Thus, the hill and the church at Canterbury were intended to remind the monks of their pleasant home on the Cœlian Mount, while, at the same time, the Pope's special injunction to win the affections of the people, by studiously adhering to spots that had been hallowed to them by their earlier heathen worship, was obeyed, and the pagan fane converted by purification and consecration into a Christian temple.

At the same time, within the city itself, the spot on which the royal residence had hitherto stood was selected for the site of the first English cathedral, which, as the sequel showed, was destined to be the most renowned of any ever erected in the island. Gregory the Great alludes, in one of his letters on this occasion, very

pointedly to the memorable gift which, according to the legend, Constantine is said to have made to Pope Sylvester. The building was dedicated to the Saviour, and it bears to this day the name of Christ Church Cathedral. The original church, of which not a trace now remains, is said, in many of its features, to have been an exact likeness of the old St. Peter's at Rome. And here, as in that ancient Basilica, the altar was originally at the west end, while, moreover, there was also a crypt which had been carefully planned to imitate the ancient catacombs. There was yet another peculiarity, which existed then as it does now, for the chief entrance into the cathedral was, from the first, on the southern side—a practice which seems to have been derived from the ancient British Churches.

The most important building founded by Ethelbert and Augustine was the great monastery, dedicated to the Apostles Peter and Paul, and situated close to the city walls, but outside them. It was destined to be the principal abode of the new brotherhood, and it formed henceforward the centre of the mission which was sent from thence to all parts of the island, and at a later period, even to the German continent. Here, within the abbey, which, several centuries later, was named after St. Augustine himself, the monks zealously prosecuted all the studies that were indispensable to their sacred calling. Gregory himself provided the materials for their first library, the ecclesiastical works of which have been minutely described to us, and of which some were still in excellent preservation in the fifteenth century. Of these works we still possess two venerable relics, in the shape of manuscript gospels, written in Roman uncials

with gold upon a purple ground, one of which is preserved in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, and the other at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. These are probably the very gospels which once served the students of that first training school from which the seeds of Christian culture were widely diffused over England and Germany.

The object of the foundation of this building is therefore obvious; but there is another peculiarity connected with the abbey which must not be passed unnoticed. The monastery, as we have already remarked, lay close to, but just without, the city walls; and here we are again reminded of Augustine's efforts to transfer, as far as possible, the local peculiarities of his former residence in Rome to his new home. Like the Dorians and Ionians, who carried the names of their cities into Pontus, to Sicily, and to every other region which they colonized; like the Spaniards, who transferred the names of their provinces and chief towns to Central America; or, like the English, who have perpetuated the designations of their counties and episcopal sees in the northern parts of the Western Continent; St. Augustine strove, in his day, to reproduce in the remote scenes of his Christian mission the names and characteristics of the home from which he and his companions had come. We know that, at that period, no interment had as yet been allowed within the walls of Rome, and that cemeteries were outside the city along the sides of the great highways, by which it was approached from every direction. Augustine found that there was an old paved Roman road which ran from Canterbury to Deal, and by which he had himself come on his first arrival. Here he de-

termined to fix his burial-place, in close proximity to the ecclesiastical institution which was destined to give direct vitality to the diffusion of Christianity in England.

The spot in which lie buried the remains of the first primate of England and the first Christian English king, served as a direct memorial of the Appian Way, as the church of St. Pancras was intended to remind the far-travelled monks of the Cœlian Mount and their distant homes. Such associations as these are frequently met with in the history of St. Augustine: thus the cathedral of the see of Rochester was dedicated to St. Andrew, and the great Christian church in London to the Apostle Paul; while the abbey at Westminster, which had been erected on a spot at which Christians had worshipped and pagan Saxons had offered up their sacrifices, perpetuated the name of the apostle St. Peter.

Augustine died on the 26th of May, 605, with the joint titles of abbot and archbishop, and when he had in person accomplished the principal objects of his mission. His abbey continued to stand until the sixteenth century, when, under Henry VIII., all the monastic institutions of England were destroyed. In the middle ages, after a special and more richly endowed monastery had been associated with the cathedral, St. Augustine's Abbey became embroiled in many odious contests, such as are of too frequent occurrence in the history of monastic institutions. The only authenticated remains of this once vast edifice is a noble gateway belonging to the fifteenth century, together with two beautifully ornamented and well-preserved turrets. We must not pass unnoticed the fact that, behind this gate, which now

again serves as a principal entrance, and on the site of the old abbey, there stands a capacious building in the old Gothic style, in which, with its hall and chapel, the national Church of England provides for the training of her missionaries, who are destined to be sent forth to every part of the world. At the same spot from whence the first Christian teachers of the Frisians and the continental Saxons set forth on their mission of conversion, Negroes, Hindoos, and Polynesians, now receive the instruction and ordination necessary to fit them for carrying the knowledge of the Cross to all zones and to all the nations of the earth. Here, then, we have a verification of the words used by King Alfred, the West Saxon, when he says of St. Augustine, "Pope Gregory, the champion of the Lord, sent him forth to carry the glad tidings of the Gospel over the salt waves of the sea to those who dwell in the islands."

To a later age, and to a very different sphere of ideas, belongs another person, whose memory will never be severed from Canterbury, notwithstanding the changes which time has wrought and still may bring with it. The associations to which we refer are especially connected with the cathedral, of which, as we have already mentioned, Augustine laid the foundation. We know but little of the history of the original building, but it is certain that, in the eighth century, there arose in connexion with it a Benedictine monastery, which speedily contrived to wrest from the canons and from the members of St. Augustine's Abbey, who were not a little tenacious of their exceptional position, the rights which they had hitherto enjoyed, and which soon began, in opposition to the suffragans of the province, to act as the

chapter for the diocese of the metropolitan see of the island. This new brotherhood even contrived nefariously to deprive their neighbours of Augustine's remains, in order that they might, on the ground of possessing these precious relics, maintain the pre-eminence and authority which they had assumed. This, and many similar questions, maintained the bitterest dissensions for several centuries between these rival institutions.

The ancient cathedral disappeared towards the close of the Saxon period. Lanfranc, the great scholastic primate under William the Conqueror, began the colossal edifice whose foundation walls remain, for the most part, uninjured to the present day; and although a destructive fire, which occurred in the year 1174, consumed the roof and arches, we still meet with undoubted traces of the best Norman style of architecture in the elegant columns of the stairs on the north side, and in the magnificent crypt. The plan of the building, as we now see it, and the commencement of its execution, are therefore due to the great Archbishop Stephen Langton, who lived in the first half of the thirteenth century, and to whose energetic character England, and the world at large, are indebted for the Magna Charta. The primate's sarcophagus is on the south side of the building, where it projects through the wall far out into the churchyard, as if the dead had belonged not wholly to the Church, but more than half to the world. The execution of this great work was furthered by an occurrence which threw far into the shade all other events connected with Canterbury, with the exception, perhaps, of Ethelbert's conversion, and was the occasion of giving to the cathedral a monument which, although it did not, perhaps, cause

those of Lanfranc, Anselm, Stephen Langton, and many other celebrated men, to be wholly forgotten, yet led them, for many centuries, to be comparatively neglected. This monument was the shrine of Archbishop Thomas Becket, erected after he had attained to the character of a martyr and a national saint.

It would carry us too far beyond our limits were we here to repeat the often-told tale of this remarkable man's life, or were we even to enter into a discussion of the conflict in which he was so long engaged. But it is decidedly not out of place for us again to remonstrate against the widely diffused error, which is mainly due to Thierry, and according to which Becket is to be regarded as a representative of the Saxo-Germanic element, in opposition to the Plantagenet King, Henry II., who appears before us as the impersonation of the spirit of Romanism. Now, if we adhere to purely national and historical points of view, we cannot fail to see that such a hypothesis is the very opposite to the truth. There is no Church quarrel in that century regarding the details and agents of which we have such authentic records. There are probably a thousand genuine letters extant from the different persons who took part in these transactions, and we have at least twenty descriptions of Becket's life and passion, which were written within the first fifty years after the martyrdom. It was not long before the credulous generation of those days had learned to look almost blasphemously upon the four most distinguished of these writers, who had all been eye-witnesses of the scenes they recorded, as the evangelists of this new Saviour; while their narratives, which were copiously interlarded with tales of miracles, were collected in the

so-called "Quadrilogus." We find, from unimpeachable documents, that not only must the descent of the martyr and his immediate progenitors be referred to Normandy, but that even his mental and physical training, and the weapons with which he contended, must be regarded as essentially Norman, and almost Romish, in their character, whilst the king, it is evident, strove to maintain an Anglican Church on the basis established by the Saxon kings, and by his ancestor William the Conqueror; at the same time that he had recourse in his defence to genuine Saxon and German modes of action. Becket, who, as chancellor, had shown himself the thoroughly worldly-minded executor of his sovereign's commands, strove with zeal, as soon as he attained the primacy, to carry out to their ultimate consequences the pseudo-Isidorian decretals, and strenuously endeavoured to enforce in England the exaggerated pretensions of Gregory VII. and the recently published doctrines of canonical law, as taught by Gratian. We find, on the other hand, that in the trial which was carried on against Becket, who ranked as the first peer of the realm, Henry II., for the first time, employed a mode of judgment which may be regarded, in the history of the English constitution, as a form of trial by jury. The secular and the ecclesiastical power were most violently opposed to one another in this conflict, in which the former, under the guise of a powerful monarchy, maintained the victory within the limits of the kingdom, while the archbishop fled from the country as soon as he was convinced that the judgment of his peers would go against him, and that even the majority of his clerical brethren disapproved of the arrogant spirit in which he

had conducted himself. He was, however, supported on the Continent by the authority of the Pope, and was thus able to prosecute his quarrel with undiminished bitterness and violence; and notwithstanding all attempts to restore mutual amity, the rancour and dissimulation exhibited on both sides precluded the possibility of any sincere reconciliation. At length, Becket resolved to return to England, not, however, with the design of retracing a single step that he had once taken, but rather for the express purpose of enduring shame and infamy, and, if matters came to extremities, to perish within the consecrated building in which he had been accustomed to officiate, and thus secure the victory by dying the death of a martyr.

That this was the determined resolution of the prelate seems obvious if, guided by the narratives of contemporaneous writers, we examine the cathedral, and thread our way through the extensive ruins of the former archiepiscopal palace and the adjacent monastery.

When, after partaking of his usual midday meal, Becket was employed, on the 29th of December, 1170, in conversing, as was his wont, in one of the chambers of his palace, with his monks and priests, on matters of business, he was aware of the arrival at St. Augustine's Abbey of those four knights who, having eagerly seized upon a few fatal words of their sovereign, had hastened from Normandy, resolved, sword in hand, to force this inflexible prelate to submission. Not long afterwards, the knights, each one of whom had his own special grievance against Becket, entered the apartment, when, after a somewhat defiant mutual greeting, there arose a violent altercation, the only result of which was to

fortify the prelate in his resolution and increase the wrath of his antagonists. They soon hastened back to the courtyard in order to prepare for the deed of blood, by resuming their weapons, which they had thrown aside on their arrival, and by placing their companions on guard at the entrance gates. In the meantime, all was commotion within the palace and the monastery. As it was already growing dark and vespers had begun, most of the monks had collected together inside the church, but some, braver than the rest, hastened back to secure the gates and then hurried to the apartment of the archbishop, whom they earnestly entreated, without a moment's loss of time, to take refuge within the consecrated walls. For a while he obstinately opposed their entreaties, as he had given his word to the enemies who were thirsting for his blood that he would await their return; but a thought having struck him, he commanded that the archiepiscopal cross should be borne before him, and then suffered himself to be dragged rather than led by his monks and priests through the back postern door of his palace, along the north cloister of the cathedral. Step by step we may here trace his progress, as he made his way into the massive chapter-house where the ceremony of enthroning the archbishops is still performed, and passed through a side-door into the lower north transept of the cathedral. The increasing darkness of the night could readily have allowed Becket to conceal himself from his murderers, who were now hurrying fully armed through the transept, and he might have taken refuge either within the chapels of the Virgin Mary and St. Benedict, or in the crypt, the steps leading to which were close by, or even within the chapel

of St. Blaise, which was concealed in an elevated recess. He was in the act of ascending the broad steps that lead to the elevated choir, in order that he might die in the imposing and theatrical manner which was congenial to his character, within the venerable porphyry chair behind the altar, in which the archbishops were wont to receive consecration and homage, when the appearance of the knights stopped him; and turning back, he encountered them in St. Benedict's Chapel, where, after a short but angry discussion, in the course of which a taunt, uttered by Becket, roused the anger of his foes to the most unbridled rage, he met his death with an unmoved and truly heroic fortitude. This was the last and most terrible event in the conflict which the crown had waged against the Church. The sword had, at length, been fully drawn, and the Anointed of the Lord stricken down, but he was himself answerable for that reiteration of crimes which had now terminated in murder, sacrilege, and the desecration of God's temple. Even as he had himself desired, he suffered a martyr's death. With his blood he had opened to the Church the road to victory, and with her now rested the charge of avenging his fall.

It would lead us too far were we to enter into all the details which have been preserved regarding the events of that terrible night, and there are only a few special particulars to which we will here draw attention. While the murderers, rushing forth from the church and the presence of their victim, were ransacking the archiepiscopal treasury for documents of every kind, the monks, who had one by one ventured to return, now proceeded to raise the beloved corpse and the cleft skull, bathed in

its blood. As they turned aside the cloak, which still lay undisturbed around the body, they discovered to their great surprise, the rough hair clothing which, like the humblest penitent, the martyr had long worn, and with cries and lamentations they lifted up the body and laid it, surrounded by all the insignia of the archiepiscopal dignity, in a new sarcophagus, standing at the eastern extremity of the ancient crypt before the altars of St. John and St. Augustine. In a short time these treasured relics were securely laid within their safe repository, and even before any plan could be formed for preparing a more worthy and magnificent resting place for them, rumours were heard of the miracles that were already performed by the remains of the heroic martyr. Before three years had passed, Pope Alexander III. who had taken up Becket's cause, proclaimed his canonisation; and thus St. Thomas of Canterbury, whom the Catholic world had enrolled among the heroes of her faith, began soon after his death, to exercise spiritual dominion over the minds of his countrymen.

This period was marked by great political disturbances; and King Henry, who had succeeded in maintaining his ground in a truly national manner against the aggressions of an ambitious and haughty priest, now found himself involved in insurrections of the most dangerous character on both sides of the Channel. While his own flesh and blood, his first-born son, was rising in rebellion against him, a papal interdict had announced to the whole world that the chastisement of heaven was impending over his crowned head in vengeance for the crime to which the king himself had given the first impulse. Henry, who hitherto had never been

at a loss as to the choice of action, was now thoroughly perplexed, and whether policy or a changed state of feeling actuated him, certain it is, that on the 12th of July, 1174, his people saw him walking bareheaded and barefooted through the streets of Canterbury on his way to do abject penance within the Cathedral. Reverentially he followed in the track of that recent tragedy, and kneeling in the crypt before the grave, he made his confession to the attendant monks and priests, and suffered them to scourge his naked back. The following night he spent prostrate on the cold stones within the damp and mouldering crypt. And what were the fruits yielded by a penance and a submission as humble as that of the Emperor Henry IV. at Canossa? A few days afterwards a messenger knocked at midnight at the king's chamber-door in his London palace, and brought with him the joyful tidings that, at the very same hour in which the king had left Canterbury, his enemies in the north of the kingdom had been signally defeated in a great battle. Thus then forgiveness had been accorded to him, and a new miracle had been wrought!

Some weeks later, on the 5th of September, occurred the fire to which we have already alluded, and consequently a long interval elapsed before the relics could be taken from their concealed resting place and deposited beneath a more suitable monument. It was not till the year 1220, fifty years after the martyrdom, that the new Cathedral, and more especially the choir that had been built behind the high altar and carried out far to the east in special honour of the martyr, was so far completed that the solemn translation of the remains

from the crypt to the sumptuous shrine in the upper church could be solemnized. On the 7th of July of that year, the ceremony took place in the presence of the young King Henry III. attended by a brilliant court and surrounded by a crowd of native and foreign prelates. The celebrity which in a short time was attached to the name of the saint, not only among all the nations of Western Christendom but even at Jerusalem, Acre, and Constantinople, whither the fame of St. Thomas had been carried by the Crusaders, and where churches were dedicated to him, fully justified the efforts made by the English nation—to which he especially belonged—to erect to his memory a sumptuous shrine which should surpass every other of the kind both in regard to splendour and peculiarity of architecture.

The miracles wrought by the saint, and the magnificence of his shrine continued for three hundred years to attract worshippers of all ranks, from the highest to the lowest, together with thousands of idle spectators and innumerable true sufferers. Emperors and kings reverentially performed their devotions before his sarcophagus, and left behind them, for the further adornment of his shrine, gold and many precious stones, whose intrinsic value, or special beauty had already rendered them celebrated in history. It was in the spring more especially that the three great roads leading into Canterbury were thronged with innumerable crowds of devotees. The hostelries and shops of the old city, of which a few remarkable examples still remain, were then crowded with pilgrims from all parts of the British Islands, and from almost every nation of the Continent. All

thronged into the church to kneel and worship at the shrine, but it was only to the most distinguished that the monks exhibited the more precious relics, such as the upper part of the cloven skull. Of the thousands and thousands who came there, each pilgrim offered his penny, and each mounted and descended the steps on his knees,—the effect of this act of humble veneration being still apparent in the deep hollows that have been worn into the stone.

There are, however, other and more lasting memorials within the cathedral which owe their origin to St. Thomas of Canterbury, for not only is the vast edifice filled with the monuments of his successors, both in Catholic and Protestant times, but there are two memorable graves here, within which rest the remains of a king and prince who had hoped, by choosing their last resting-place by the side of the martyr, to find that peace in the tomb which had been denied to them in their lives. The first of these was the greatest and most warlike hero of which England could boast in mediæval times, and one who, in some particulars, might even be compared with Wellington; for Edward the Black Prince, whose great military talents gained the most memorable victories of his age, both in France and Spain, possessed chivalrous qualities which made him the true and typical representative of the perfect English gentleman, and won for him the sincere admiration, alike of friend and foe. His varied and active life, his sufferings of body and mind, and his premature death in the lifetime of his father, are too well known to need further notice. But less clear are the scanty indications which we obtain regarding the reason why he should have

chosen, during his lifetime, the immediate neighbourhood of the national saint of Canterbury for the place of his last rest. We only know that when, a few months after the great victory of Poitiers, he returned to England, in March, 1357, in company with his distinguished captive, John, King of France, he visited Canterbury on his way to London. He may, perhaps, have done this in accordance with the wishes of the foreign prince, who at that time stood so much in need of consolation, and who, in the course of his many years' captivity, repeatedly testified his great veneration for the memory of the holy martyr by the presentation of rich gifts to his shrine. Some years later, however, at the time of his marriage in 1363, the prince founded two altars in the beautiful chapel at the south side of the crypt, on the walls of which we can still trace his arms. Here he caused prayers to be offered for the salvation of his soul even during his lifetime, and it appears that his mind and thoughts were more and more constantly turned towards the church in which the renowned English saint lay buried. Soon Edward began to pine away in a hopeless state of disease, and when, under the pressure of the deepest melancholy, he was preparing his mind for a calm and peaceful death, in the will which he wrote in Norman-French with his own hand, shortly before his death, he circumstantially described the manner in which he desired to be buried at Canterbury, on the south side of Becket's shrine, indicating the minutest details of the monument that was to be erected to his memory. This will was punctually adhered to, and to the present day there stands, at the spot he indicated, the magnificent tomb which, with its

splendid carvings, is equalled by few sculptures of the kind in Christendom. On the sarcophagus, which is ornamented with the escutcheon of the prince, and with the touching verses which he himself composed in Norman-French, rests his effigy, encased in gilt armour and in a coat of mail, which was once brightly enamelled with the leopards and the lilies of France, each on its own red and blue field. High aloft, between the vaulted groins of the choir, hang the well-preserved arms which he had carried in his victorious campaigns through France and Spain, his helmet, and shield, and his coat of mail, with his sword and brazen gauntlets. To a German, the constantly recurring devices of the hero which are most clearly visible, and have been distinctly preserved in the carving of his monument, are especially attractive. The motto "*Ich diene*" occurs alternately with the word "*Houmout*," which probably signified high spirit, and was, perhaps, the same as the German "*Hochmuth*;" but although its origin, like that of similar devices of the middle ages, is very obscure, it may probably be referred to the family of his mother, Philippa of Hainault, and its connexion with Germany. The motto "*Ich diene*," as far as we can now determine, appears for the first time in the escutcheon of the Black Prince, although, since his time, it has belonged to all the Princes of Wales.

The other prince, who wished in his lifetime to secure rest after his death near the remains of Becket, was the nephew of the former, and the first Lancastrian king, Henry IV. The crime by which he raised himself to the throne, and the bitter fruits which sprang from that deed, even during his own reign, undoubtedly fostered

deep remorse within his soul. We are here reminded of Shakespeare's representation of this monarch, who is made to express a wish of ending his life in a crusade, and who showed his belief in the prophecy which declared that he should die in Jerusalem, a prediction which was certainly not fulfilled in respect to locality, although it was so far verified that he died in the Jerusalem Chamber at the abbey of Westminster. With the idea of reparation in his mind, and turning away from the abbey, where the remains of his royal forefathers had been laid, he chose for the place of his burial the choir of Canterbury, to the north of the shrine, and opposite to the monument of his uncle, whose son and heir he had supplanted. Here, too, we have a noble epitaph, graved in white marble, with the effigies of the king and his consort sculptured in alabaster. On the wall, we still see the stone-carved canopy over the altar, at which, until the time of the Reformation, masses for the soul of King Henry IV. were read.

These two monuments are witnesses of the decline of the mediæval Church in England, when everything connected with religion, including the worship of saints and relics, had degenerated into the most monstrous system of abuse, and when, in England more especially, the secular wealth, the luxuriance and love of power among the clergy contributed largely to bring about the downfal of their order. A new epoch was opening to all the different spheres of life, while the earnest longing for emancipation from priestly oppression, and for a return to the orginal and uncontaminated doctrine and Church of Christ, became day by day more strongly marked. The time was drawing near when both high and low would lay aside their

veneration for a man like Thomas Becket, who had shown a most un-English passion for gaining supreme dominion over the souls and bodies of men, and when the almost smothered remembrance of a purer evangelical age, such as that in which Gregory and Augustine had lived, was again to revive.

In connexion with the period that immediately preceded the great catastrophe which crushed the power of the Romish Church in England, we possess two very remarkable narratives, which, although they differ materially from each other, concur in conveying the impression that the age of sincere enthusiasm for relics and pious pilgrimages to the graves of saints was drawing rapidly to an end. The first of these narratives is a description of the journey of a Bohemian nobleman, named Leo Von Rozmital, the brother-in-law of King George Podiebrad, who, in his visit to the court of Edward IV., also went to the shrine of "our dear Lord" St. Thomas of Canterbury, which, according to the testimony of his literary companion and scribe, was more precious than any in Christendom, in proof of which he minutely describes all its treasures, including the large diamond. He endeavours, with simple credulity, to put his faith in all the the false with which the effrontery of the monks appears literally to have overwhelmed him. The other report occurs in a letter of Erasmus of Rotterdam, in which this celebrated scholar relates his visit in the year 1512, in company with his friend, John Colet, the learned Dean of St. Paul's, to the treasures in the cathedral at Canterbury, describing the shape and nature of the relics which they saw and worshipped, and the conversation which they held together in reference to them,

and which appears to have led them to the conviction that the period of veneration for Thomas Becket was drawing to a close. The final blow was, at length, struck on the 24th of April, 1538, by the despotic order of Henry VIII., when that cunning, but rough-handed prince made use of his right of supremacy, to seize upon the countless treasures of the shrine, and scrupled not to arraign, on a charge of high treason, rebellion, and assumed sanctity, Thomas Becket, the once powerful archbishop of Canterbury, who had, for three centuries and a-half, been regarded by the nation as one of its holiest saints. That which Henry had not ventured to attempt against the shrine of his royal ancestor, Edward the Confessor, whose relics have remained even to our own day within their original repository in the choir of Westminster, he accomplished without let or hindrance at Canterbury; and while no one has ever attempted to desecrate the graves of the Black Prince or of Henry of Lancaster, the vast and magnificent shrine of the martyr-prelate of Canterbury has disappeared, leaving scarcely a trace of its existence, for nothing now remains to show where it once stood beyond a few pieces of the original costly mosaic with which the ground was paved.

The spirit of intolerance has thus left traces of its presence at Canterbury in widely remote ages, and under diametrically opposite conditions. Nothing can be more refreshing than, in the very midst of these evidences of ecclesiastical and secular passions, to meet with an example of the rarest tolerance. When Queen Elizabeth began to give shelter to the Protestants, who were escaping from persecution in France, a small

colony of French refugees, consisting chiefly of poor silk weavers, settled at Canterbury, where there was assigned to them a portion of the extensive crypt, including the spot where once stood the two altars founded by Edward the Black Prince, and not far from the recess in which the bones of the martyr had been laid after the fire and during the building of the new cathedral. Here the refugees celebrated the services of their Church, and here their descendants, who are now reduced to a very small number, still carry on their Presbyterian mode of worship in their own tongue, immediately below the south aisle of the high choir, where the Anglican ritual is observed in all its prescribed forms—a noble and touching concurrence—the parallel to which cannot be met with in any other cathedral church of England.

II.

MONKS AND MENDICANT FRIARS.

THE Christian Church, both in the East and West, was, a few centuries after its foundation, materially strengthened by the incorporation of a new order of delegates of its authority, in addition to the various administrative powers which had been developed from the original organization of the hierarchy. This new order had grown out of a natural requirement of the human mind for meditative contemplation; and while this special element became, at an early period, alike intimately blended with the inner being of the two great forms of Christianity, it differed essentially in the two; for while, in the Eastern Church its original character of exclusive, solitary self-contemplation was in time still further developed, until it became personified in the hermits and anchorites of the early ages of Christianity, in the Latin Church it contributed to fortify and accelerate the aggressive element which, from the first, had characterized this form of the faith, which was destined to gain universal ascendancy.

From the time of Benedict of Nursia, the various monkish Orders and monastic Societies have existed much in the same form as they have continued to our own day, adapting themselves to the varying require-

ments of successive ages, while they maintained the position of the militant party of the Church in opposition to the secular Clergy, who were regarded as the special guardians of the mysteries of the Christian faith. This was the character manifested by the monastic Orders in England, both in regard to the diffusion of Christianity, and the success which in a subsequent age attended her decisive separation from Rome.

We will endeavour briefly to characterize the principal movements, and some of the leading agents in the development of these Orders in England during the middle ages. We shall find here, as in every other part of the Latin Church of the West, different gradations, but all alike included in the service of the Pontiff of Rome, and all striving with zeal, century after century, to carry on the spiritual conquest of their Church. We shall see these Orders, after being reduced to a state of passive inactivity, finally driven forth from the territory, which they had endeavoured, step by step, to dispute with the new power that was rising in opposition to them. The older types of the Orders could not remain wholly unimpressed by the national and territorial influences to which they were subjected; and when at length the English popular spirit sought security in the use of the original weapons of Christian doctrine, and by their help penetrated through the closed barriers of this foreign institution, the ultimate defeat and subjection of the Orders were decided long before their final banishment.

The monks of Bangor and Iona, the companions of St. Patrick and St. Columba must be regarded as the earliest champions of the Celto-Irish Church, whose

doctrine and discipline indicate a direct descent from the East, and who for centuries successfully resisted all attempts used to bring them under the dominion of the Romish pontificate. The ardent zeal of these men was manifested in the energetic missions which they set on foot for the conversion, not only of all the different races inhabiting the British islands, but also of the Germanic heathens of the Continent; as for instance, the Franks, the Suabians, and the Bavarians. Their zealous efforts, however, were unattended with any persistent result, for their system was deficient in organization. But as soon as the Germanic races had entered within the exclusive pale of the Romish Church, and their hatred of race was strengthened by zeal for the diffusion of the only true and saving faith, the Druidical caste which had sprung from the ancient Celtic element, was everywhere compelled to yield, while these followers of the New faith not only encroached upon the ancient domain of the Celto-Irish monks, but actually carried their own conquests far beyond the original boundaries of Celtic Christianity. It was a matter of decisive importance to England that the Anglo-Saxons were converted from the heathenism of their German ancestors direct to *Catholic* Christianity. This victory was won for the Latin Church by the new order of monks, which some years before had been founded within the wild fastnesses of Montecassino; for Augustine, the apostle of Gregory the Great, and his forty pious companions, were nearly all Italian Benedictines.

We know too little of the seats of the Celtic monasticism which had preceded the Latin Orders, and are too ignorant of the social relations of the monks themselves

to decide how much the new comers may have incorporated from the old institutions. It is certain, however, that the former was characterized by a decided oriental tendency to self-contemplation and abstraction, and that the intercourse of the monks with the rude population was limited to instructing them in the homilies and creeds of their Church. There seems to have been no attempt made by the ancient British monks in Wales, Ireland, or Upper Germany to elevate themselves either in a material or spiritual manner, or to communicate their knowledge and acquirements to those around them; for they neither cut down woods, or tilled the ground, nor did they copy or even read either ancient or modern secular writings. The messengers sent forth by Gregory to teach the faith, acted on a very different principle, for in addition to the orthodox weapons of attack and persuasion which they employed against their opponents they made use of other, but equally powerful methods of subjugation, by teaching the people many useful arts that were alike beneficial to their bodies and their minds. As soon as they had settled in Kent, and had begun to spread themselves towards the north and west, they built barns and sheds for their cattle side by side with their newly erected churches, and opened schools in the immediate neighbourhood of the house of God, where the youth of the nominally converted population were now for the first time instructed in reading, and in the formulas of their faith, and where those who were intended for a monastic life, or for the priesthood, received the more advanced instruction necessary to their earnest calling. Thus these Catholic institutions became, what the Gaelic cloisters never were, training-schools for

the clergy and laity, in which these classes were taught to know the use and meaning of many heavenly and earthly blessings.

From the seventh century abbeys and priories began to be founded in all the districts of England, which, in imitation of the mother monastery of St. Augustine at Canterbury, were under the rule of St. Benedict. In the north, and especially in the island of Lindisfarne, from which the mother abbey of Durham, and many churches of Northumberland originated, these institutions were raised on the ruins of ancient Celto-Christian foundations. In some cases, as for instance at Canterbury and Winchester, monasteries were in the course of time associated with the cathedral, the members of which formed the Chapter of the diocese; whilst in other instances, as at Ely, the monastery became in time converted into a cathedral. There were even some places dedicated to the great national saints, such as St. Albans and Bury St. Edmunds, which might fairly compete in wealth, influence and power, with the neighbouring seats of episcopacy, while again at other spots, such as Walsingham, some spring or grove that had once been dedicated to the service of pagan worship, served as the foundation for the new Christian edifice. In the palmy days of the Middle Ages, England was filled with hundreds of these institutions, which sometimes gave rise to a number of villages; while in other instances, several were clustered together round one ancient seat of religion in the neighbourhood of some large town. They were all bound in common by the Canon of Montecassino, and everywhere the same forms of life and discipline existed among the brotherhood, while they everywhere

stood in the same relation to the world lying beyond the walls of their cloisters, although individual inclinations and local requirements found ample scope for development. Thus, while at Canterbury, scarcely a century after the introduction of Christianity, an almost classical mode of study was combined with practical theology under the direction of a primate of Greek origin, and its richest fruits were ripening in the far north within Bede's silent cell at Yarrow, there were many other institutions in Britain in which the Benedictines continued to devote themselves with especial pleasure, as they had done from the beginning of their settlement, to the cultivation and utilization of the unparalleled riches of the soil. We purpose borrowing from one of the numerous chronicles that have been preserved from the spoils of the monasteries to give an idea of the course of development of these institutions, and to trace by its means the manner in which they developed and maintained their social, ecclesiastical and political relations, in the midst of the many unfavourable circumstances by which they were surrounded.

The monastery of Abingdon in Berkshire, which was founded towards the close of the seventh century by the pious zeal and munificence of two princely brothers, was situated not far from Oxford, and within the ancient kingdom of Wessex, which completed the union of the different Anglo-Saxon principalities, although it was the last that was converted to Christianity. The actual founding and endowment of this institution must, however, be referred to a subsequent period, and are due to King Ini, who effected so much for the ecclesiastical and secular organization of his kingdom. Here for the first

time, an abbot and monks were duly settled, who began to put into practice the duty, which the national law, instituted by this king, had endeavoured to enforce upon his subjects, of converting at least one half of the soil into pasture and arable land. The rule of the canonized founder of their Order, required that all the brethren who were not prevented by infirmities and weakness, or by advanced or immature age, should in addition to the prescribed services of the Church, perform a daily portion of field labour. In their mode of cultivating the soil they followed the practices adopted in the warmer and more systematically tilled lands of the South. They soon engaged the services of the natives of the vicinity, and repaid their labours with a portion of the fruits of their toil; and in proportion as the woods and thickets were cleared, and the swamps and morasses disappeared, the soil yielded a more plentiful return, while the land being leased and sub-let, became the means of placing the monastery, which was in fact the central point of the entire system, in the position of a rich proprietor. From such centres as these, the beams of a new and hopeful life radiated in every direction.

The waste places became fruitful, and the land was intersected by many new roads, in addition to the few old Roman ways that had never been entirely destroyed. Even the waste within the heart of the people vanished, and their old hereditary Paganism gradually yielded to the advance of agriculture, and to the blessings shed abroad by the seeds of truth that had been scattered over the land by the spread of the Gospel, although many ancient memories of heathen days still clung to the soil, and were kept alive in the minds of the people

by various local names, and by numerous heroic tales and traditions.

The monasteries, like the Church in general, were especially efficient in smoothing down those prominent inequalities of rank which had characterized the national institutions of all the German races in their colonizations; and here for the first time the rude power and right of the sword were opposed by mildness and mercy, both in matters of law and administration; and an unwearied perseverance shown to secure a better fate for all who were held in the harsh bonds of slavery. Christian mercy had been one of the virtues most stringently enforced by St. Benedict, who had enjoined upon the brethren to devote a large portion of their time and means to the care of the poor and needy, and to the fulfilment of the duties of hospitality. In furtherance of this object, many rich donations had been early poured into the coffers of the brotherhood, while the legacies of the benevolent, the tithes, the pence collected for the masses for the dead, and the money which after a time was allowed to be given for exemption from ecclesiastical penances, were all at first most conscientiously devoted to these purposes.

The requirements of the monks, and the instruction they were able to impart around them, soon led to the establishment in their immediate neighbourhood of the first settlement of artificers and retail dealers, while the excess of their crops, flocks and herds, gave rise to the first markets, which were, as a rule, originally held before the gate of the abbey church. Thus hamlets and towns were formed, which became the centres of trade and general intercourse, and thus originated the market

tolls, and the jurisdiction of these spiritual lords. The beneficial influences of the English monasteries in all departments of education and mental culture extended still further, even in the early times of the Anglo-Saxons, for they had already then become conspicuous for the proficiency which many of their members had attained in painting and music, sculpture and architecture. The study of the sciences, which had been greatly advanced through the exertions of Bede, was the means of introducing one of his most celebrated followers, Alcuin of York, to the court of Charlemagne, for the purpose of establishing schools and learning in the German empire. And although every monastery did not contribute in an equal degree to all these beneficial results, all aided to the best of their power and opportunities in bringing about that special state of cultivation, which characterized the Middle Ages.

These palmy days of prosperity, the memory of which was perpetuated among the monks by many donations from pious benefactors, were only too soon followed by a period of heavy trial. Scarcely were the struggles between the hereditary Kings of Wessex and Mercia definitely settled, when there occurred that fearful invasion of the pagan Danes, which, like the approach of a swarm of locusts, threatened to destroy every trace of civilization. The monasteries, which were the foci of wealth and population, naturally attracted the eager cupidity of these fierce pirates. In the southern, and midland parts of the country, their path of destruction could be traced by a line of smoke-blackened walls, and by fields choked and overgrown with weeds. Gold and silver, the garnered fruits of the earth, and the cattle

within their stalls, were all seized upon, and carried away by these ruthless victors, while their former possessors wandered penniless and homeless over the land, carrying with them their few books and the vessels they had used in the performance of their religious ceremonies. Abingdon was doomed to suffer the full meed of this horrible calamity, and it was only Alfred's victories that brought salvation to the land, and saved it from thoroughly receding into its ancient barbarism. When, however, the monks began again to settle in their former homes, they not only found that the land would have to be again reclaimed from a state of almost utter wildness, but that their own discipline had become grievously relaxed during this period of misrule; and the necessity for the re-organization of the entire monastic system was felt during the tenth century as urgently in England as in any other part of Western Christendom. Everywhere the most flagrant worldliness had invaded the monasteries, and it became imperatively necessary to draw the reins of discipline more tightly, and to accommodate the system to the new order of things in the State and Church in order to keep at bay the mortal foe that threatened the very existence of monachism. The reformation, or rather the increased strictness of the old Benedictine rule, which had emanated from the Abbey of Cluny, through France and Burgundy, and was associated in Italy with a few monkish zealots, and in Germany with an eccentric emperor—supported by his bosom friend, the holy Adalbert, who suffered martyrdom at the hands of the heathen Prussians—found in England its chief supporter and promoter in the nobly-gifted, but gloomy fanatic,

Archbishop Dunstan. In the pursuit of his object this haughty prelate carried his exactions almost to the verge of inhumanity in his dealings with his Sovereign, but on that very account, perhaps, the clergy, who were almost all opposed to him, were unsuccessful in their opposition. They have, to a certain extent, avenged themselves on the memory of the primate by giving currency to the fabulous, but indelible, imputation that St. Dunstan was a powerful sorcerer, and in league with the Evil One. The chronicles of Abingdon, and of some other monasteries, afford evidence, however, that Dunstan met with many active supporters in his work, which, independently of much that was evil, was also the means of effecting many beneficial changes. Ethelwold, Abbot of Abingdon, was one of his most zealous adherents. He translated the Rules of St. Benedict into Anglo-Saxon; and when he was raised to the See of Winchester, introduced these amended rules into the monastery of his diocese, while his house at Abingdon contributed largely, by the labours of several of its gifted members, to the reformation of monastic discipline at Ely, Peterborough, Hyde, Thorney, and many other places. These renovations were imperative, if the monastic institutions were to be adapted to the great changes of the eleventh century; and they may, to some extent, be regarded as one of the means of preparing the way for the acquirement, by the Normans, of the supreme rule both of the State and Church, and as the transition from a purely Germanic to a Romanised condition. We must look upon the strict monastic discipline which Archbishops Lanfranc and Anselm endeavoured to establish in accordance with foreign precedents and by the help of Italian and

French Monks, as a continuance of the work that had been begun by Dunstan and his contemporaries, while the monastery of Bec, in Normandy, must be regarded as the actual training school of the Anglo-Saxon monasteries which had been then recently appropriated by the Normans.

The seeds of the gradual decay of these institutions were, however, planted in the same age. It was obviously necessary that the monasteries should be organised in accordance with the sharply defined feudal system that had been introduced into the State by William the Conqueror. Thus in regard to all lands which were not included in the ancient freehold property of the Church, the Benedictine abbots enjoyed the same rights, and tendered the same duties as their ecclesiastical and secular brethren—the bishops and barons. They exercised the right of jurisdiction over the property which they held, and supplied the king with subsidies of knights and squires, or in default of this, paid the customary amount of scutage, in accordance with the number and value of their fiefs. When, at a subsequent period, the parliament was constituted and organized by the representatives of the different shires and boroughs of the kingdom, a large number of abbots, who were distinguished as the mitred abbots, took their places in the Upper House, and continued to sit as peers of the realm until the time of the reformation. Thus the monastic houses became on the one hand important agents in the mechanism of the secular State, whilst on the other hand, the tendency of the new interpretation of the canonical right of the Church, which had originated with William the Conqueror's great cotemporary, Gregory VII., was to establish

the hierarchy on a perfectly distinct footing in the world, and to place it far above the supremacy of the State. The conflict between the secular and the ecclesiastical power, and the fear lest the Church should make use of her sacred and religious character as a cloak to cover an unrighteous desire for mere external gain were strongly manifested in the history of English monastic institutions in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. At that period their original purpose was still manifest, but it was gradually lost sight of in the course of time, through the obstinate adherence to their much cherished principles, which resulted in their destruction. The good and the bad elements inherent in these institutions were at that time nearly equal, and in the following remarks we will trace the subsequent course of both.

We hear nothing more of missions for the conversion of heathen races; while nobles and peasants have long been rivalling the monks in the art of cultivating the soil. The sphere of activity of the monastic clergy was therefore greatly circumscribed, but they were still suffered, without let or hindrance, to practise the duties prescribed to them by their Church, of singing the praise of God, exercising mercy and charity, instructing the young and cultivating learning. In some of these particulars they subsequently achieved great success. Several of the abbeys acquired the reputation of being benefactors of suffering humanity; some prosecuted the instruction of the young with signal success, whilst others acquired lasting fame by the writings of their members. As Latin continued to be the language used in the services and public business of the Church, the study of this tongue was never wholly neglected, and

many English monks, more especially in the time of the first of the Plantagenets, industriously contributed by their copies to keep up an acquaintance with ancient models of style, or to multiply later writings that treated of spiritual matters, while they also collected together an important mass of writings, consisting of the annals of their respective houses, the biographies of their most distinguished brethren, numerous letters, and even state papers. It would almost appear as if the office of a royal historiographer, or keeper of the archives, had been permanently associated with the distinguished Abbey of St. Albans, since we find that, for several centuries, regular historical annals of the realm were kept there, together with copies of the protocols of the diplomatic transactions, enacted both at home and abroad, but more especially with the Papal and Imperial court. Simultaneously with this varied activity, which has proved alike valuable to their own and subsequent times, there prevailed a condition of things lamentably the reverse, but which was undoubtedly favoured by circumstances. Since the new dynasty, in the person of Henry II., had established internal order and peace in the kingdom, new sources of wealth, such as they had never before known, had been opened to the monastic institutions. Their crops and cattle, their trade and barter, had brought them very considerable profit, whilst the constantly increasing prosperity of the country augmented the tithes, and increased the money fines paid in default of penances, at the same time that it had become almost a fashion among princes and nobles, that scarcely any one should make his last will and testament without bequeathing to the monastic

institution with which he had been most closely connected during his life, some rich gift, in land or other property, or large sums for the altar, and for the saying of masses. Sometimes even, rich men founded monastic houses from their own resources. Thus avarice and an eager desire for acquisition grew with increasing wealth, and every device was soon deemed justifiable that could satisfy this passion for power. Donations, which would never have been freely made, were extorted from the dying, under the threat of withholding extreme unction, or in return for its administration and the assurance of eternal salvation. The superior knowledge of the monks, and their acquaintance with the art of writing, were prostituted to the lowest ends; and records of olden times were forged or falsified to give validity to the tenure of any questionable property which their house might hold. The State, which in the meanwhile was becoming more and more firmly based upon law and order, now therefore felt itself imperatively called upon to take up the cause of those who died intestate, and by legal enactments to put a stop to further usurpation in the name of the dead, and at the same time to prevent the annihilation of its own supremacy by the subdivision of the feudal tenures. The ecclesiastical powers came into conflict in the twelfth century with the market towns and boroughs, of which a large number had been formed through their own instrumentality, exactly as they had previously come into collision with the crown. In these boroughs and towns commerce and trade had acquired an independent footing, and had already secured special municipal rights; but notwithstanding this, the ecclesiastical houses obstinately insisted upon

their claim to receive the principal proceeds of the market and other tolls, without themselves contributing to them in any form whatever. In many instances, lawsuits arose out of these differences, as between the abbey at Westminster and the city of London, while in other cases, as at Bury St. Edmunds, the monks and townspeople fell to blows, and fought their rude brawls within the very churchyard, or even inside the walls of the abbey. At length the State was obliged to interfere, and under Edward III., a statute was passed, forbidding priests and monks from taking part in future in trade or business. While these spiritual Lords were careful to appeal to the exceptional rights which their Church claimed whenever they made any attempts unjustly to appropriate the property of others, or to maintain unchanged their old privileges, notwithstanding the totally different circumstances of the times, they were still more disposed to advance such assumed claims whenever the canonical jurisdiction came into collision with the laws of the land and the officers appointed to enforce them. A singular cause of irritation had existed throughout all the Middle Ages, which finally grew to such a height, that it required the most stringent measures for its removal. The beneficent privilege of an asylum, or sanctuary, which in olden times had once attached to certain consecrated spots where oppressed innocence might secure safety from the rough hand of power, had, through the pertinacious adherence of the clergy to their ecclesiastical exemptions, gradually grown into an abuse by becoming the means of affording the ordinary criminal illegal, and sometimes even treasonable, protection. Many of the monastic houses about this time secured

permission, either through papal or secular intervention, wholly to separate themselves from the episcopal community, the result of which was to leave their abbots invested with all the rights of bishops within the limits of their own domains and jurisdiction. It thus happened that in the course of ages the rich monasteries and abbeys became the seats of luxury, self-indulgence and despotism, and not unfrequently the hotbeds of disturbance; since, under the plea that they had acquired, governed, and appropriated their great wealth solely and exclusively for the honour of God, they insisted upon being judged by very different moral and political principles, from those which secured them protection and favour, and enabled them to live in ease and affluence. In the course of the twelfth century we first see the exalted, almost child-like, and grateful devotion, with which the populace had hitherto looked up to these institutions, beginning to decline; for a time, a certain mutual respect was felt by both parties, but this was soon changed on the side of the people into uncontrollable hatred and contempt.

The chronicles of the abbey at Abingdon give us a most welcome insight into the easy and comfortable lives which the brethren there led as early as the days of Edward I.; and we are not a little struck by the admirable manner in which they managed to subdivide the labour of their pleasant duties, that the burden might not press too heavily upon any one, modifying and amplifying the simple and strict rules of their founder, until the purpose for which they were originally designed was completely subverted. The germ of humanity which had bloomed so beneficently within the

precincts of these institutions in the days of barbarism, had now given place to a rank growth of fleshly lust and worldliness. The abbot and his chapter had, as everywhere else among the Benedictines, long maintained a courtly state, and lived entirely apart from the ordinary brothers. At first the representatives of these high powers were installed in offices which were admirably well adapted to the establishment of ordēr within this exclusive institution, and to the maintenance of its varied relations with the external world, but which, after a time, came to be gradually perverted into mere instruments for securing increased power or self-indulgence.

The rules and regulations in regard to the rights and duties of the prior and sub-prior are very circumstantially set forth, whenever either of these functionaries was called upon to supply the place of the abbot when, either from absence, or any other cause, he was prevented from appearing in the chapter, at divine service in the chapel, or at the common table when stranger-guests were present. The precentor and the sacristan were specially appointed to provide for the requirements of divine service, whilst the secretary and the chamberlain were joined in one common charge—by no means a very onerous one—of superintending the domestic arrangements of the household. Very circumstantial are the instructions in reference to the choice of an appropriate master-cook. This important business demanded the careful deliberation of the abbot and chapter, that the choice might fall upon a mild and merciful man, who, being himself sober and moderate, might the more willingly afford consolation and

protection to all sick and needy persons, and be a veritable father of the congregation, serving and following his Lord in all things, as it is meet and right that he should do. This highly important functionary was to be relieved, excepting at high mass and at some special festivals, from the ordinary attendance at chapel during the heat and burden of the day; and he had, moreover, full authority to provide for the kitchen in the surrounding villages. He gave the signal for the saying of grace at table, for sitting down, and for drinking; and, while he had the privilege of being served on high fast-days with three special dishes of fish, he was expected to provide for the wants of the hospital and the necessities of those who came to ask alms. The cellarer, we are told, should be circumspect in speech, liberal in giving, sober and moderate in regard to all excesses, while he is also to be meek and pious, for the Apostle, in his Epistle to Titus, enjoins that we should "live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." He was not allowed to absent himself so frequently from divine service as his worthy brother, the master-cook; for the care of the bread, beer and wine, under his charge, do not require such profound thought, nor such incessant activity, as the duties of the kitchen. He was, however, exempted, on account of the burden and heat of the day, from attending masses, complines, and other day-services. But he must take care to supply the brethren abundantly with good beer at their ordinary noon and eventide meals, and see that they find their cups well filled when they return fasting from their chaunts and prayers. The refectioner laid the table, and, after placing the abbot's spoon and the prior's

beaker, arranged the platters of the rest of the community in the order settled by established ceremonial practice; he also did part of the honours in the presence of guests, both in carving and meteing out the drink. Other officers, with well-defined functions, devoted themselves to the duty of entertaining strangers, giving alms, superintending the hospital, for which medical knowledge was especially necessary, and to the supervision of the fields, woods, and pastures. Everywhere the self-importance and verbose diffuseness of these multifarious regulations, which are abundantly interspersed with texts of scripture, show that, amid all the piety and liberality assumed by these virtuous confraternities, their chief object was to promote, as far as possible, their own bodily well-being and enjoyment.

We can scarcely wonder that, in such a state of things, the most unprincipled selfishness should have threatened almost wholly to supplant the good old Christian virtues of charity and hospitality. At Bury St. Edmunds, the cellarer had run into debt with a Jew, because, for three years together, he had been obliged to defray, from his own purse, the cost of entertaining the guests who came to visit the abbot, whose avarice was too great to suffer him voluntarily to supply the means necessary for the purpose. On the third day after the appointment of a new cellarer, it happened that three knights, with their several attendants, entered the abbey-gates, when that functionary, being fully equal to the emergency, took his keys in his hand, and, ushering the guests into the hall, where the abbot was seated, addressed him in these words:—"My lord-abbot, you know full well that knights and burghers are received by you whenever

you are in residence. I cannot, however, entertain the guests that come to visit you; and, therefore, if you will not alter your former practice, I beg you to take back these keys of the cellar, and to give them to some other brother." Such decision may very probably for a time have been attended by good results; but in Bury, as in every other house of the Order, avarice and selfishness completely subverted all nobler interests, and not only made the monasteries a common butt for the contempt and scorn of the populace, but even struck a deep blow at the internal organization and peace of these institutions.

The voice of public opinion, which had already found vent in forcible rhymes and political satires, made the indolent and luxurious monks the special objects of its attacks. According to the description given in one of these compositions, the abbots and brethren were wont to ride forth after the manner of the sleek monk in Chaucer, with a falcon on the wrist, mounted on stately chargers, and even outvying knights in the chase. They, and their community, who were enjoined by the rules of their Order to go barefooted, had long worn warm socks and furred boots, and wrapped themselves in cloaks and hoods lined with rich skins. At the gate of the monastery, we are told a strange state of things had come to pass; for, while some poor people are praying, for heaven's sake, that they may get the alms they had been wont to receive, they are harshly driven away by the porter, whilst others, who are able to bring with them a letter of recommendation from some gracious lord or other—who might chance sooner or later to prove troublesome to the abbot—are instantly led into the refectory, with

every show of civility, and are well cared for. In another composition we have a description of an imaginary Order, in which monks and nuns live together *in dulci jubilo*, with no high walls and no broad dykes to separate them, as was unfortunately the case at Sempringham. The thirsty brethren are here permitted, as was said to be the practice at Beverley, to regale themselves with wine and beer after the evening meal, until the foot's length of wax taper, which each one received, was burnt down. There is certainly no doubt that the followers of St. Benedict had sunk into the very slough of unbridled debauchery in their fabulously rich English benefices, and into a state of licence which no hypocrisy could any longer conceal, and which was favoured by the example of the prelates, who were seldom without their concubines and paramours. In the fourteenth century they had already forfeited the respect of the people, and the measure of the sin of these numerous profligates and idlers was already filled to overflowing; yet two hundred years passed away before their overthrow, which was ultimately brought about with as much harshness and want of tolerance as Henry VIII. could impart to the final blow which threw down the entire system.

While the Catholic Church in general had only been able to make its long asserted immutability and infallibility manifest to the people by occasional public, although tardy, modifications, and incessant, but secret amendments of the various parts of its structure, a similar condition of things had prevailed among the monkish Orders, who might be looked upon as its body-guard. At the time of the first crusades, when the

power and influence of the pontificate and of the feudal system had reached its culminating point, some of the nobler spirits of Western Christendom were moved, among other extraordinary desires, by the most eager wish for a re-organization of the Benedictine Order. The old severity, abstinence, and piety, were, if possible, to be reinstated in the midst of a century of unbridled licence. From these endeavours there sprang up within the Latin Church the Orders of the Camaldulenses, Cistercians, Premonstratenses, and Carmelites, each of which had its own special ascetic tendency. They soon spread themselves over England, but the Cistercians seem certainly to have attained a far higher importance in the country than any of the others. Their first attempts at a reformation were undoubtedly much aided by the efforts of a young English monk, who had contributed largely at Citeaux to the task of simplifying and tightening the rule. Those who took the vows were bound to confine themselves to the most limited amount of clothing and food; most of their time both by night and by day was given to the service of God, and to the exercise of severe penances, while the rest was devoted to the object of maintaining themselves by severe bodily labour, only interrupted by short intervals for sleep. All high mental cultivation was discouraged from the first, and the brethren were taught to seek their principal occupation in labouring in the woods and fields. It must remain an undecided question whether the powerful appeal of Bernard of Clairvaux, who had presided over the mother-monastery at Citeaux since 1115, or the direction which was now given to the pursuit of agriculture, was the cause of their rapid spread

in England, but certain it is that, about 1132, a man of noble birth, named Walter Espec, liberally founded the first Cistercian Monastery at Rievaux, in Yorkshire, which was soon followed by others in different parts of the kingdom, as for instance those of Jorveaux and Fountains Abbey, in the immediate neighbourhood, and Waverley, Coggeshall, and Hales, with several others in the south of the island. Special regard seems to have been paid in their foundation to the character of the soil, and the leading idea that regulated their choice of locality appears to have been influenced not so much by a taste for romantic solitude, such as was evinced by the first Benedictines' Houses, as by the desire to secure pasture and arable land, which might enable the brethren to perform their allotted field labour, and to procure them their necessary maintenance.

The English Cistercians distinguished themselves from the first by the great care and attention which they gave to the breeding of sheep; and they unquestionably contributed far more largely than the great secular landed proprietors to bring the wool trade, which was one of the principal sources of national wealth, to the perfection which it attained in the middle ages. But it was by these very means that they themselves acquired a degree of prosperity and monied wealth, which, notwithstanding all their asceticism, put them in the possession of those very agents of corruption which had well nigh been the ruin of their predecessors. The Cistercian monasteries in England were not slow in following the example set by Citeaux, which, on the death of St. Bernard, and, perhaps, partly in consequence of the glory which his memory shed upon the Order, had renounced the old

severity and humility of their House, and now thought themselves entitled to compete with Cluny for supremacy in regard to wealth and influence. Richard Cœur de Lion, who, indeed, had granted an annual donation of an hundred marks to the general council of the Cistercians, in memory of his accession to the throne, was able to count upon their wool treasures for the liquidation of the ransom which was to deliver him from the prison of the German emperor; and, when subsequently he was pressed by his never-ending embarrassments, he repeatedly made despotic loans on the proceeds of their summer shearings. When his brother John had fallen out alike with the Church and his subjects, and was beginning to give vent to his passion and wrath, his avarice found no readier source of satisfaction than in the sheep-flocks of the Cistercians, who, if we are to believe contemporaneous accounts, must indeed themselves have been most thoroughly fleeced by the sovereign. Such drains as these must certainly have very seriously affected the exchequer of the brethren, but, for the time being, no doubt they exercised a salutary check on their excesses. In England, no less than in France and Germany, the severity and simplicity of their rule may be traced in the very ruins of their monastic buildings. Even the chronicles which were compiled in the Cistercian monasteries have a dry matter-of-fact style about them; while the Benedictines wrote, even at that early period, with elegance, although certainly with much less attention to truth. But however many individual features of greater consequence may have survived amongst them, it is undeniable that the rapidly attained wealth of the Cistercians in the thirteenth century led to the same results as among the Benedictines;

so that the popular ill-will was directed indiscriminately against all these Orders, who elicited, without exception, one and the same expression of popular hatred.

There was, however, another special form of monastic life, generated within the Church itself during the middle ages, for the maintenance of its fundamental principles. This was the Orders of the Mendicants, especially of the Franciscans and Dominicans. Their founders had been moved by the powerful appeal of the great pontiff, Innocent III., who aimed at nothing short of a universal dominion, and a regal hierarchy. The great movement that had been directed under the name of the Crusades by Western Christendom against the East had been productive of evil, but previously unsuspected results. The organization of different states began to be disturbed, and new systems promulgated; while, through contact with Mahommedanism and Asiatic idolatry, the inherent tendency of the Norman and German mind to enlarge upon independent and various forms of doctrine had become powerfully stimulated to heresy and infidelity. What therefore could have been more welcome to Innocent and his immediate successors than to meet, at the right moment, with the very defenders whom they needed,—men possessed of resolution and energy sufficient to stifle these dangerous tendencies while there was yet time? Francesco of Assisi and Domingo the Castilian formed new ecclesiastical confraternities in accordance with new principles at the moment of all others that the Pope most needed them, and at a time, moreover, when it was of vital importance to prevent certain impulses of the European Christian mind from being wholly destroyed. Both founders placed the injunction of complete

and unconditional poverty at the head of their canons, and both were ready to suffer every torture of body and soul to carry on to victory the one true and only saving faith, while both were equally ready to sacrifice their individuality for this one supreme object. The Italian sought to attain this end by private exhortation, while the Spanish reformer endeavoured to reach it by means of eloquent public preaching. It would appear that their Orders, and others which were formed after them, and which were all comprised under the common designation of the Mendicant Orders, were more or less strongly drawn to different countries, in accordance with the amount of sympathy existing between their own tendencies and tastes and those of the different nations among whom they settled. While the Dominicans evinced an evident preference for Spain, France, and the Rhenish district, the Franciscans seemed most at home in Italy, in a great part of the German Empire, and in England. We are here more especially called upon to consider their sphere of activity in the latter country; and in the furtherance of this object we purpose availing ourselves largely of some valuable materials which have been recently published.

In the year 1244, that is two years before the death of their enthusiastic founder, a small band of Minorites, as the Franciscans liked to be called, landed at Dover, and proceeded direct to the metropolis. Although they were of different origin, some of them being Italians, others Frenchmen, and others again Englishmen, they were nevertheless equal in all other respects; for not one of them owned any other worldly property than the thick russet hood and serge frock with which his naked limbs

were covered, and the cord that bound the robe round his waist, or scourged his naked back. They carried nothing with them but a book of prayers and writing materials. Thorough beggars, they went forth two and two as their rule required, ready for the labour that had been committed to them. The principles on which their organization was based had already been tested on the continent, and found therefore the more readily a cordial recognition when the Order was transplanted to the British soil. The monastic societies of all their predecessors in the different kingdoms of Western Christendom had shown special predilection for rural districts, and had built their houses far from densely populated towns, where, in imitation of the castles and halls of the princes and nobles of the land, they lay surrounded by woods and parks. A strong aristocratic resemblance manifests itself in all the earlier monastic Orders; and during the period of their first development they had everywhere kept aloof from cities, and even after a time had endeavoured to make the villages, towards whose formation they had originally contributed, directly dependent upon themselves. Their whole life, indeed, was unsuited to cities, such as they were constituted in the north and south of Europe during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Behind the city walls there was then crowded together a mass of various elements, which were working out their own independence, and seeking protection from the selfishness and oppression of feudalism, or from the tyrannical power of the Church. An important trade both by sea and land served as a means for the attainment of hitherto unknown material riches, and of knowledge, which was of immeasurably higher value. The

maritime towns of Italy and southern France imported in their galleys, not only the luxuries of the East and the enjoyments that were associated with them, but they acquired through the same channels a familiarity with those secret arts of magic, which were forbidden by the Church, and with many rank and exuberant forms of heresy. All these novelties were rapidly diffused through these recently formed cities, whose self-governing communities had to a great extent emancipated themselves from the control both of the secular and the ecclesiastical power. The Church now for the first time perceived the incalculable injury which the burghers might inflict upon the higher ranks, and, above all, on the Church itself, if they were once to secure material and intellectual freedom; and Innocent III. lost no time in doing what he could to avert the danger while there was yet time. At such a moment a man like St. Francis must have appeared to him as a messenger sent from God. Francesco of Assisi had once been engaged as a merchant on the shores of the Mediterranean, and his many years' experience had thoroughly made him understand how to treat with men of all nations and all classes. The necessity for acquiring the knowledge which such experience yields had been made incumbent on his followers, to whom the turmoil of a city life seemed from the first to have been almost a necessity.

Hitherto the servants of the Church had almost wholly neglected the lowest grades of the city populations. The monasteries benefited the country people, while the cathedral stalls and the town livings were occupied almost as hereditary appanages by the secular clergy, with whom the proceeds of their benefices was the main

object of consideration, and who therefore seldom performed the duties of their offices, except when compelled by necessity. The richer burghers alone were brought in contact with them, while the trade guilds usually had chaplains of their own. It was under these circumstances that the Mendicant Friars entered upon their spiritual mission, as we might now call it, among the poor and the young of the civic populations, whose numbers were rapidly increasing in all the maritime and mercantile towns, where they had almost run wild through ignorance of every form of religious worship and secular instruction. The narrow unwholesome streets were overcrowded by a dense population, incessantly afflicted in body with the miseries of dirt, hunger, and disease, and vitiated in mind by the habitual practice of every form of vice and crime. It was among this class that the plague in its periodical attacks slew its thousands, and that leprosy had become domiciled, as it were, with all the terrors that were wont to rend asunder every social tie. Among this class too had fallen stray seeds of the oriental sensualistic doctrines of religion, while even some politico-communistic tendencies had begun to contend with the few germs of Christian learning that by chance had found their way thither from the outer world. It was against all these enemies that the Franciscans boldly resolved to make war; but in the conflict the only tactics to which they trusted were identity in position and fortune with the poor among whom they laboured. Being wholly without earthly wealth of any kind, they associated with the poor on equal terms, and as companions and sharers in the same vicissitudes and the same fate. The Franciscans, by enjoining the removal of dirt, prepared the way for a

purification of the air and the ground, and while the brethren tried to impress upon the idle that even the smallest amount of labour may help to stave off hunger, they showed by their service in the Lazarettoes, that had been erected through their earnest endeavours, that they had no fear of infection from leprosy or the black death. They baptized the children, confessed the men and women, and gave extreme unction to the dying. The Franciscan thus became the benefactor of crowds of hitherto neglected and lost beings, who owed to his care the salvation of their bodies, and to his teachings and admonitions the peace of their souls. And thus the Mendicant Friar was alike the friend of the men in all things affecting the business of their daily lives, and the confidant of the women in all that concerned the care of their houses and children.

The first appearance of the Franciscans, and the plan of activity which they followed, had been everywhere the same. Everywhere, whether in London, York, Oxford, Bristol, Warwick, or Lynn, they erected the same miserable barrack-like houses, with the same small unsightly chapels, in the very worst parts of the town, or in the suburbs near the walls, which separated the privileged burghers from the unprotected crowds without. Nothing can be more significant than the locality and the name of the spot which they selected as the site of their House in London. It was situated in the very midst of the slaughter-houses of the city, and was known as "Stinking Lane." Here they presented to the people the example of contented poverty and privation, and from hence they superintended their heroic mission to the Leper Hospitals. Soon the confraternity

consisted only of native Englishmen, and now for the first time the monks could address the common people in their own tongue. The most important rule of their founder had enjoined upon them to maintain the same footing, and remain in the same relations as those among whom they performed their ministrations, an innovation which gave great umbrage to the clergy, who, throughout the whole of Western Christendom, had hitherto almost entirely lost sight of the distinctions of nationality and individuality, and were now, for the first time, beginning to see whither their exclusiveness and their use of Latin were bringing them. From the very first, the Mendicant Friars appear in strong antagonism to the secular clergy, who reproached these servants of the Church for their friendly intercourse with the populace, and accused them of endeavouring, by an over-zealous and studied mode of preaching the Word, to attract the populace to themselves in an unseemly manner. St. Francis had, however, himself given the impulse that tended to draw his followers from the practices of the clergy, and of the older Orders. This genuinely practical man insists that his followers shall not become learned, or seek their pleasure in books, "for I am afraid," he says, "that the doctors will be the destruction of my vineyard." This is entirely in conformity to the natural order of things, for learning drives men to investigate still further for themselves, and to try to satisfy wants which were quite incompatible with his command of absolute poverty, and with the object for which it had been enforced. All his efforts, therefore, were directed to prevent such a result. A Testament and a Prayer-book were the utmost that the Franciscan monk might

call his own, and he was allowed to learn and to practise the arts of reading and writing, solely because they might be required in the pursuit of his hard and humble occupations. Libraries were an abomination in his eyes, and, according to his opinion, they had contributed quite as much to the degeneracy of the Benedictines as the wealth which had given rise to their irregular lives. When the original stringency of this rule was beginning to be somewhat relaxed, Roger Bacon, who belonged to this Order, and who was one of the most learned men that the Middle Ages could boast of, complained to the Pope, to whom he dedicated his Works, that he possessed no manuscripts, and that the use of ink and vellum was scarcely permitted to him, and he, therefore, urgently prays the Holy Father to grant him dispensation from this severe restriction. The cramped and contracted writing, and the numerous abbreviations which are to be met with in manuscripts written by Franciscans, as well as their peculiarly involved style and the intentional absence of all quotations from the Latin Classics, have been referred, not without good grounds, to the influence of the original principles on which the Order was founded. Even the doctrinal tendencies of the brotherhood seem to have exhibited a decided leaning to practical theology, and to the same direction of mind we may refer their vivid realization and almost matter of fact mode of representing the life and sufferings of Christ, and the increased stimulus which they gave to the worship of the Virgin Mary; arising, no doubt, from the fact that the Mendicant Friars, unlike their monkish brethren, were brought into intimate relations with family life, which had taught them to honour and respect the character of women.

We find that scarcely thirty years after their first organization there were already more than a thousand Franciscans diffused throughout England in their nine-and-forty monasteries. Their Houses had everywhere been erected by means of donations from the pious, or willing contributions from the lower classes, or had been assigned to them by the transference of land and buildings from the wealthy classes, but it was always on the distinctly recognized condition that such houses and lands were merely to be regarded as alms given for a time by the pious, but never in any case to be considered as the actual property of the Order.

The extraordinarily rapid growth and the unparalleled popularity of the new confraternity fostered a germ, which, although at first it only yielded the most precious fruits, was destined to be developed into a luxuriance of growth, destructive to the Order itself. The human mind was so unnaturally fettered by the Franciscans and Dominicans, that, more powerful than its oppressors, it naturally broke its bonds wherever the barriers which opposed it were the feeblest.

Although the Franciscans were forbidden to apply themselves to learning, the care of the sick, which was enjoined upon them, necessarily directed their minds to the study of medicine and natural history. It was not long before the practical tendency, which was peculiar to them, led them to the study of physics and chemistry; not, however, as heretofore, by the path of theoretical speculation, but by the co-operation of experiment—an advance in the method which they were the first to establish, and by which Bacon arrived at the most remarkable results in almost every branch of physical

science. True physicians and chemists of European origin are not met with before the thirteenth century, and then they were to be found almost only among the ranks of the Mendicant Friars. The mercantile origin of their Order may have had an influence in determining the great predilection which they evinced for remote missions and distant voyages, in the course of which they observed everything that fell under their notice, and collected every form of information that was accessible to them; and this treasure of knowledge, when once acquired, was never wholly lost again by the different nations to whom it was introduced. By the middle of the century, the Franciscans and Dominicans had traversed all the coasts of the Mediterranean, while some had even visited the czar at Kiew, and penetrated far into the interior of Asia among the Tartars. Others of the brethren had made even greater advances in other departments of research. From physics to metaphysics the transition is short. The task of endeavouring to wean the common man, gifted with a natural mother-wit, from his own primitive ideas, by means of forcible demonstration, led the Franciscans direct to the study of logic and dialectics. No very long time had elapsed since these men had first settled themselves modestly and diffidently in the suburbs of Oxford, when, in imitaion of the University practice, one of their body began to lecture to his brethren on philosophical learning. The celebrated Chancellor of the University, Robert Grosteste, Bishop of Lincoln, a noble-minded prelate, who was far more free from prejudice than men of his rank and age commonly were at that time, had his attention drawn to these new teachers, and, wholly

indifferent to the opposition which he might meet with, soon became their most zealous friend and patron. He had long perceived that the old and tedious school routine of the *Trivium* and *Quadrivium*, as well as the pertinacity with which the theologians, in furtherance of their own worldly aims, were devoting themselves almost exclusively to the study of the canon and civil law, was likely to divert university studies still farther from their noblest and highest aims, and he therefore had no scruples in taking part with those who promised to benefit theology by bringing it into more intimate connexion with the interests of real life. And, in truth, the theology of this new school remained free from the dryness and abstruseness of the older systems as long as it adhered to its original popular mode of preaching, in which the subject was wont to be richly seasoned with striking allegories and forcible comparisons, and was closely connected with material objects. But the learning, investigations, and modes of application of the order, were necessarily being constantly carried forward; and they not only studied the physical writings of Aristotle—that great teacher of all ages and all races of men—but they discovered in his logic powerful weapons, which they applied to their own purposes. With these weapons they learnt to combat whenever they were called upon to dispute concerning questions of the highest importance, or to refute the heterodoxy of their opponents. It has even been attempted to be shown that, by the help of the Aristotelian logic, the Franciscans and Dominicans introduced a far more earnest mode of interpreting Holy Writ, and that they approximated much more closely than their predecessors to the

true critical conception or rational comprehension of the Scriptures. In this respect, therefore, as well as in regard to their earnest zeal in preaching, they would have ranked among the forerunners of the Reformation, if their efficiency in all departments had not been counteracted by a fatal reaction.

The crowning glory of the English Franciscans is the University of Oxford, which they boldly and daringly attempted to gain over to their side under the patronage of the Bishop of Lincoln. The greater number and the most celebrated of the great scholastics of their order, who were renowned in physics and metaphysics, but who, on the one hand, carried their system into the depths of obscurity, and, on the other, raised it to the highest point of subtilty—as for instance, Roger Bacon, Duns Scotus, and Occam—studied at Oxford. The colleges of this University acquired in a short time such a high reputation amongst all the neighbouring nations, that German and French chairs were filled by teachers from Oxford, and the University even ventured to enter into competition with the sister University of Paris, which was under the control of the Dominicans. There are still extant the letters of one of the best teachers belonging to the first period of this epoch. This writer, the *Doctor Illustris* of the schoolmen, was Adam de Marisco, or Adam of Marsh. He had been early befriended by Grosteste, had studied in his youth at Oxford, had taken holy orders, and had subsequently entered the ranks of the Franciscans. From this period dates his activity in lecturing, which was destined, about the middle of the thirteenth century, to lay the foundation of all the results which he obtained for learning at

Oxford, and which consequently also contributed to the training of those distinguished ornaments of learning. His letters give us a deep insight into the practical tendency which then prevailed at the University, and the opposition with which it was met, while they also afford evidence of the intimate and undisturbed connexion with all-important phases of life which still existed at the University in that generation. At a place which was then resorted to by a crowd of ardent youths, eager for knowledge, where the threads of political agitation were not unfrequently interwoven with the concerns of everyday life, and where consequently the maintenance of municipal and academical discipline must have been a matter of very considerable difficulty, there must necessarily have been much to be done in reconciling the frequently conflicting functions of the widely differing and variously intermingling authorities of the secular and the ecclesiastical powers. Many of the letters bear evidence of this. At one time we find this ever-active man endeavouring to obtain increased stipends and allowances for poor students of merit, or books and vellum for some industrious members of his order; at another time he is anxious to secure his brethren protection from the hostile University authorities, or to free them from attendance on some course of lectures. At one time we find him preaching before the court, or, by the command of the pope, exhorting his hearers to join the crusades; at another time he has business with the Parliament in London, while he also accompanies the archbishop to Rome, and is one of the delegates at the Council of Lyons. Then again we find him actively occupied in the spiritual duties of his brotherhood, either compassion-

ately administering consolation in the hour of bitterest need, relieving the conscience of a man who has unjustly possessed himself of property, or giving his advice and assistance to a poor woman, who has been involved in a complicated matrimonial process, and has been unmercifully dealt with by subtile and avaricious practitioners of the law. But amid all these avocations he has always time to correspond with such friends as Grosteste, or the learned brothers of his order in Italy and France, whether on scientific subjects or in relation to some philosophical or theological work. Some of his letters are addressed to the King and Queen, to Richard, Earl of Cornwall, and, indeed, chiefly to the highest personages in the land. The most important of these letters are, however, unquestionably those in which this remarkable man opened his heart to the friends with whom he was connected by the ties of genuine affection. Among the most celebrated of these were the two greatest reformers of the Church and State in those agitated days, the Bishop of Lincoln and Simon de Montfort, the great Earl of Leicester. With both of these men it seems to have become a matter of necessity to consult their intimate friend, Adam of Marsh, in all affairs, whether great or small, public or private. The bishop he encouraged without ceasing; cheering and strengthening him when his courage seemed about to give way under the colossal weight of his attempts to counteract the destructive attacks of the pope, to raise the Church from its worldliness, and to put an end to the idle depravity of the monks. De Montfort, who had just placed himself at the head of the celebrated movement against the despotic and aristocratic misrule of Henry the Third, was even

then the darling of the nation—a character which, if we may judge from the letters before us, he most thoroughly deserved. Adam of Marsh must have been the real bond of union between the earl and the bishop, who were sincerely attached to each other. He appears as the father-confessor and principal adviser of the family of De Montfort, who, when the Earl has taken the supreme command in Gascony, writes to announce the approaching confinement of his wife, and gives him a report of his young sons, who, at the recommendation of the *Doctor Illustris*, had been entrusted to the care of the bishop for their education. Other passages give us glimpses of the noble heart of the earl, who was fully resolved to lay the foundation of a stable form of government for all the states and classes of the population. His courage and his wisdom are repeatedly praised in these letters, and he is encouraged to persevere in his plans for achieving the freedom of all the noble spirits who were pining under unjust oppression, whether from the State or the Church. Nor were warnings and injunctions wanting; and the noble earl is entreated to be on his guard against the deceit and treachery which were lurking near him. He is constantly begged to practise patience, and never to give way to a proud security, or suffer himself to be too much elated. The Word of God must at all times be as a lantern to his feet. We can scarcely too much lament that such admirable testimony of the interchange of ideas that existed among these men was doomed to cease before the crisis of the great struggle for legislative power, which did not occur till some years after the death of Grosteste and Marsh.

If we are not mistaken, the remarkable Latin poems,

which treat of the leading ideas of the great popular movement, and the sudden readiness of the third estate for a genuine constitutional form of national government, are to be referred to the same clear and calmly judging spheres of observation. It is certain that none but Franciscans could so admirably have depicted the purposes of knights and burghers, and the recognition of the supremacy of the laws over arbitrary will.

Soon after the termination of that long and bitter political contest, and about the beginning of the fourteenth century, the decay of the Franciscans was clearly manifest in all the departments of action to which they had hitherto devoted themselves with such signal success; and from this time forth the order advanced with rapid strides towards its final overthrow. Notwithstanding the haircloth which they wore upon their bodies, and in defiance of the law of the land, which interdicted the monastic orders from acquiring possession of landed property, both Franciscans and Dominicans had accumulated earthly treasures for themselves, and had made the fundamental command of their founder a mere lie, by enjoying vast property, and erecting stately residences for themselves, which were held in the title and name of others, for the sake of evading the prohibition against the tenure of land and houses. It is true that they never assumed the aristocratically exclusive forms and habits of the Benedictine orders, but rather maintained with zealous care their original relations to the lower classes of society; but in doing this, they rapidly sank to that depth of coarseness, meanness, and sinfulness, which has been described with striking touches in Chaucer's poem, and is commemorated in many of the productions

of the popular satirists of the day, for it was now too evident that the once popular mendicant brothers presented the same scope for scorn and ridicule as the sleek and portly monks of the magnificent Benedictine and Cistercian abbeys. The once pious hospital-servitors, and the benevolent diffusers of every kind of useful knowledge, had now degenerated into unprincipled quacks and charlatans, who strove, by means of worthless gifts of spurious relics and false medicines, and by the shameless misuse of the secrets of the confessional, to subvert the peace of domestic life; deceiving the men, or making them drunk in the taverns, while they undermined the virtue of the women. The daring with which they had once taken part in the conflict against the pretensions of the Papal chair, both in England and Germany, the resolution with which they had for a time supported the secular authority, and aided in bringing the struggle for freedom to a successful termination, had been changed into the most unprincipled effrontery, and perverted to their own advantage, while their pretensions, and opposition to all other authorities, and their daring attempts to keep in subjection the consciences of men, knew no limits. Their adherence to the external forms of their rule degenerated into the most repulsive hypocrisy, in comparison with which the openly exhibited love of pleasure of the monks appears comparatively unobjectionable. Their knowledge had degenerated into mere unprofitable theorems and subtile hair-splitting arguments, while the great majority of the brethren were sunk into a state of illiterate stupidity, which would hardly have been a source of gratification to St. Francis, could he have foreseen it. They had

forfeited the opportunity which they once possessed of bringing about a much desired and greatly needed reformation in the Church and the State, as well as in society at large, although they still sought to augment the power which they had acquired in the University, in defiance of the daily increasing complaint that they aimed at nothing short of the exclusive subjection of the minds of the young to their teaching. Enemies were gathering round them on every side; and even in Oxford there stepped forward, from the ranks of the secular clergy, an opponent who hesitated not to proclaim the irreconcilable hatred with which he entered the lists against them, and who now turned the whole art of scholastic dialectics against those from whom he had learned it, and with whom it had originated. And although they may, indeed, have maintained their ground against Wiclif and his followers, the spark of evangelical truth that had been kindled by the preaching of this devout-minded Reformer never wholly died out, notwithstanding the attempts that were made, century after century, to extinguish it. Till the time of the reformation of the Church under Luther and his contemporaries, the monastic and mendicant orders underwent no further renovation of any moment; and it was only when the victory had been wrested from Rome, that new champions of the pontificate arose, who, although they tried to follow better paths than those which their predecessors had trodden, nevertheless borrowed many things from them which tended neither to their welfare nor their profit.

III.

THE PARLIAMENT IN THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY.

More than six hundred years have passed since the English Parliament began to have a history of its own. An institution of such high antiquity, which, in the course of ages, has undergone numerous vicissitudes and experienced important self-imposed modifications, and which, arising from small beginnings, has attained colossal dimensions, and thrown its roots deep into the fate of the country, and even of humanity at large, must necessarily possess an early history, in which some genuine traces of its origin may still be detected. But the history of the early phases of its development is obscure and interrupted, like that of the great nations of the earth, and the absence of reliable information has too often been supplied by mere conjecture, or even by tradition and invention.

It is long before a nation awakes to self-consciousness, and therefore we can scarcely wonder that the English people should only have begun at a comparatively late period to collect the records of their Parliament (which was, in fact, the real organ of their national existence), or to attach any importance to the knowledge of the sources of its origin. At the time of the Reformation, under Henry VIII. and Edward VI., the House of Lords, for

the first time, set the example of recording current affairs by keeping a journal for the entry of the minutes of their proceedings; and it is not till the time of Elizabeth and the Stuarts, that we meet with inquirers who venture to assert independent views regarding the mode of origin of the National Assembly.

In the course of their investigations, these inquirers found only scanty authentic materials in reference to the earlier period of its history. Although since the time of Henry II., the first of the Plantagenets, who, about the middle of the twelfth century, began to centralize the administration of the kingdom, every occurrence, however insignificant in itself, if it touched upon the prerogatives and possessions of the Crown, has been entered in the Royal Exchequer Rolls, which have been preserved to the present day; and although, since King John's time, every Chancery record has been regularly entered either on the Close, Patent, or Charter Rolls, we nowhere meet with the original form of writ used to summon Parliament, as required by Magna Charta. It has been conjectured, that the clerks of the Exchequer—the oldest State-office established by the Normans—with whom the charge rested, must either intentionally have neglected their duty from an idea of the little importance to be attached to it, or in some unaccountable manner have suffered the draughts connected with this business to be destroyed. At a later period—that is, from the end of the thirteenth century—the Chancery held it imperatively necessary to keep records of the meetings of Parliament, and to enter upon its Rolls the names of those who had received writs. From the time of Edward II. there appeared under their authority special

Rolls of Parliament, which, although they did not give minutes or protocols of each meeting, contained short arbitrary notices of the proceedings, as well as extracts from the most important resolutions and enactments.

Unfortunately, no writer or chronicler of the time thought it worth his while to give a sketch of Parliament, so that we are not justified in assuming, as is sometimes done, that this institution was suddenly organized in a somewhat revolutionary manner. The slow course of development which it went through, and which was only occasionally accelerated, was not adapted to excite in any specially high decree the attention and surprise of contemporaries. There exists, indeed, a remarkable treatise, under the title of "*Modus tenendi Parliamentum,*" which belongs to a period not much later, and which, although it has been regarded as almost theoretical, affords us a tolerably comprehensible representation of the great national council. Its date became for the first time a subject of earnest critical discussion about the beginning of the seventeenth century, when the English people saw themselves in danger of being deprived of their traditionary rights and liberties. Sir Edward Coke, the well-known Chief Justice in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, was the first to draw attention to this document, and his notice of it referred more especially to a copy, bearing the undoubtedly apocryphal title of "The Manner of holding Parliaments, as practised by William the Conqueror, according to the Precedent of Edward the Confessor." This great lawyer credulously believed in the genuineness of the title, and, until the time of the Revolution, his view seems to have been very generally held. At that juncture, William Prynne—who at one time, in the triple

capacity of barrister, political writer, and member of the House of Commons, had resolutely opposed the arbitrary measures of Charles I., for which he twice suffered the punishment of the pillory and the loss of one of his ears, but who, having grown less violent under Charles II., had been appointed Keeper of the Records in the Tower—discovered this document in the course of his investigations of the historical treasures under his charge. In several pamphlets, written with his usual passionate violence and ponderous erudition, he not only declares that the statement conveyed in this title is untrue, but further insists that there is no older manuscript of this work than one of the time of Henry VI., or even of Henry VIII., so that this document could at most only afford a description of Parliament from the end of the fifteenth century. But in his blind zeal he overshot the mark, for he had not only overlooked an edict of King Henry IV., dated at the beginning of that century, in which this prince sends the document on the holding of Parliaments to Ireland, for the observation and imitation of his government there, but he had also failed to notice a printed assertion of his contemporary, John Selden (a man equally well versed with himself in archæology and jurisprudence), that he had found a copy of the "*Modus tenendi Parliamentum*," belonging to Edward III.'s time, and therefore about half a century older. There are several MSS. of this work extant, some of which bear the date of Richard II.'s time, and consequently belong to the end of the fourteenth century. It has been proved, by recent careful researches, that this document existed in the time of Edward I., and most probably as early as the year 1295, and therefore eighty years

after the signing of Magna Charta. With such an antiquity as this, it, therefore, most undoubtedly deserves to be appealed to in an investigation into the earliest history of the English Parliaments.

By the help of this work, which is, however, by no means very comprehensive in its character, a few meagre notices from the chroniclers, and a number of ancient edicts, and above all by the aid of Magna Charta, we may perhaps be able to draw up a tolerably faithful representation of the manner in which the English Parliament was developed in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; and learn to comprehend the elements of which it was composed, the rights and duties which it acquired in the course of a century or little more, and the forms which it assumed, and in which its proceedings were conducted.

Many attempts have been made, and much time expended in endeavouring to connect the origin of Parliament with the *Witena Gemote*, or national assembly of the Anglo-Saxons, or even with the original form of government, described by Tacitus, as existing among the ancient Germans. We still hear of a free yeomanry who are supposed to have taken an independent part in the administration of public affairs under a national monarchy. But those who adopt this view entirely lose sight of the existence of the feudal government of William of Normandy, which formed a characteristic interval between ancient purely Germanic institutions and the Parliament of recent times, which has been developed by the fusion of many different factors into one consolidated whole. The Conqueror, in accordance with principles of rigid severity, founded a system

of government which was at once military, administrative, and judicial, and which was under the control of one supreme despotic hand. And although his son Henry I. pledged himself, in his coronation oath, to keep the laws of Edward the Confessor, the last of the Saxon kings, the pledge probably implied little more than a mere reference to the old laws of the land, which, when they did not obstruct the working of the Norman system, were allowed to subsist amongst the conquered races. This consolatory assurance, which is certainly to be found in the Charters of Henry I., Stephen, and Henry II., very probably, however, applied to the Anglo-Saxon independent local government within the different counties and shires, and to the right of trial by jury which still prevailed in the rural districts. Of an assembly taking part in the administration or enactment of laws, there was as yet no idea under the first Norman kings. The Courts which they usually held three times in the year, viz. at Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide, seemed, as far as we can judge, to have been nothing more than ceremonial celebrations of those high festivals at which the king appeared, wearing his crown and the other insignia of his rank, and surrounded by a numerous attendance of his great feudal-vassals. It was not as yet a court of jurisdiction, in which judgment was given, or a meeting for the discussion and settlement of affairs of state. The clergy alone claimed the exceptional rights, which they had enjoyed in the Saxon times, and continued, as they had hitherto done on account of their higher cultivation, to take part almost exclusively in the conduct of public affairs.

But in the fourth generation from the Conqueror, after

the fierce right of the sword had prevailed almost exclusively under King Stephen, and the fusion of the conquered and the conquering races had begun, and when consequently many questions had arisen as to the right of possession and property of the two parties, the Saxon elements which had hitherto been suppressed began, for the first time, faintly and slowly to revive. To their influence we may, indeed, ascribe many important advances in the organization of courts of jurisdiction and the more uniform mode of administering the law. In the next generation we find the Great Barons, who had once been participators in the spoils of the conquest, and who may be regarded as the richly salaried officers of their victorious captain, advancing in a compact body against their sovereign, whose powers had become almost unlimited, and, with arms in their hands, extorting the Magna Charta. This was not a case in which individual vassals, who had grown too powerful to rest contented as subjects, renounced allegiance to their prince, as frequently happened on the Continent at that age; for here an entire estate of the realm rose as one mass, and thus won for themselves a common ground from whence the germs of constitutional right were destined to be developed. At the same time, there were now brought more prominently to view certain collateral parts of the great system, which, although they had long enjoyed consideration in social life, did not as yet possess any legally defined status in the realm. A distinction must naturally have been drawn between the Greater and the Lesser Barons, depending on the size of the fiefs which they held. The under-feudatories were not, however, forgotten; and they obtained their rights the more

readily, since William the Conqueror, anxious to maintain the military unity of his realm, had established the uncontrovertible principle that the arrière-vassals were to tender an oath of fidelity direct to the king, besides doing homage to the baron, or feudal chief, from whom they held. It was owing to this principle, as well as to the circumstance which was closely connected with it that the great fiefs of the crown should never conglomerate into unities, but should be scattered over different parts of the kingdom, that England was saved from sharing the fate of Germany; and thus not even after the events of Runnymede was it possible for any of the barons, by the support of their feudal vassals, to raise themselves to an equality with the sovereign. Then, moreover, the old difference of races between the Normans, who held the larger fiefs, and the Saxons, who were only in the secondary rank, was not without its influence. The great mass of the lower freemen, who were proprietors as well as vassals, belonged undoubtedly to the Saxon race, and it would almost appear as if this party had met with special favour under Henry II. As soon, therefore, as a national assembly was formed, it became expedient to make a separation between the different members of the entire body of freemen, who were either proprietors or tenants in chief.

The Norman Court days had been entirely discontinued in their ancient form, after the conflicts and struggles for the crown which took place between the Empress Matilda and King Stephen. They were most assuredly, at that time, only attended by those barons who were specially favoured by the sovereign, or whose property happened to be in the vicinity of the different

places of the royal residence. We first meet with distinct summonses to Parliament at the period when Magna Charta was granted, which in consequence of the separation into two classes, to which we have already referred, are issued in two ways, viz. personally and collectively. In regard to the former class, nobility of birth or a theoretically assumed right of interest in the administration was taken into such slight account, that the sovereign caused a summons to be issued chiefly on the ground of special confidence or personal acquaintance, and probably also with reference to the value of the estates owned by the individual summoned, the proximity of his place of residence, and the consideration in which he was held by his equals in rank. Those who were thus personally summoned constitute, therefore, the first germ of the Parliament, and, in contradistinction to the lesser Crown vassals and tenants in chief, who were summoned collectively, form the basis of the future House of Lords. But here the questions arise: who were the men who, not long afterwards, laid claim to the dignity, rights, and hereditary titles of peers of England, to what class did they belong, and under what designation must we characterise them?

Magna Charta recognises as an anciently established distinction the difference between spiritual and temporal lords, giving the pre-eminence to the former, as the servants of the Church. Among the Anglo-Saxons, as in the dominions of the Norman-French, the prelates—that is to say, bishops, abbots, and even some priors—were almost the only persons who could read and write, or who were skilled in any useful art, and on this account they were naturally admitted into the councils of the

sovereign, in the double capacity of confessors and men of learning. The lands they held were, however, the freehold property of the Church, and wholly independent of the State. The Norman prelates had, on the other hand, done military service when they took the field, armed and mounted, to aid William in the conquest of England, in return for which that prince had endowed them with great baronies. From that time forth, therefore, they took their seats in the council of the State in right of their Crown fiefs, and, like the temporal lords, furnished subsidies in time of war, exercised the rights of judicature, and occasionally, when circumstances tended to it, came into collision with the Crown; their temporal peers, the commons, and even their own order, whenever they endeavoured to screen themselves under their exceptional spiritual rights in regard to legal judgments, involving loss of life or property, or whenever there arose questions that either actually were, or could be assumed to be, of a purely ecclesiastical character. On the other hand, however, in the summonses which in the course of time were issued with great regularity, the dignity of the barony and the peerage predominated, and thus the secular rank, to a certain extent, took precedence of the ecclesiastical dignity, since it was only those abbots and priors who could prove by the deeds and grants in possession of their houses that the lands they held were not Crown fiefs, but ancient Church property, which had belonged to it before the Norman period, who were able to claim exemption from the often burdensome attendance on the national legislative assemblies. It is, however, an important fact in reference to future times, that the prelates derived their right both of sitting and voting

in the assembly through their tenures of Crown fiefs, and not as dignitaries of the Church; and it was in consequence of their having been thus incorporated with the temporal lords into one sole and compact body of the State, that England was happily spared from the unpropitious results which have generally followed the incorporation into the State of a special assembly of the clergy. The princes of the fourteenth and fifteenth century, the Edwards and the Henries, strangely enough, found it decidedly to their interest to summon a majority of prelates —indeed, often more than double the number of the temporal lords—a proof how much they needed the support of the clergy against the assumptions of the several noble families who were at that time rising to the rank of a firmly consolidated hereditary peerage.

The temporal lords did not originally possess any *hereditary* right to take part in public or political assemblies, either among the Saxons or on the occasion of the holding of the old Norman courts. There were, indeed, at all times gradations of rank, so that the dignity of the Saxo-Scandinavian earl became merged in the rank of the Norman count—a dignity which the King-Duke William I. distinguished from the time of the Conquest by great endowments. It is, therefore, in accordance with a still older precedent that Magna Charta and the ancient document to which we have already referred distinguish between two classes of temporal peers, viz. earls and greater barons. The dignity of earl was granted by royal letters patent, and was accompanied by solemn investiture with the sword, and by a grant of the so-called third penny of the county—that is to say, a third part of the profits of the sheriff's county court—a rental

which was intended to assist the noble lord in maintaining a state commensurate with his rank. For the rest, however, the earls had nothing to do with the military, administrative, or judicial government of the counties from whence they derived their titles, which subsequently ceased to be exclusively connected with the ancient divisions of England into counties and shires, and were taken indiscriminately from cities and towns, and even from different court and family dignities. The higher rank in relation to the other barons was therefore purely personal. We must not, however, entirely pass over a notice which occurs in that ancient document, to which we have already referred under the title of "*Modus tenendi Parliamentum*," since it appears to indicate the recognition of the sharply defined gradations of rank which existed in the ancient Germanic system. Thus, for instance, it specifies that while an earldom must contain at least twenty knights' fees, a large barony requires only thirteen and a half fees. These knights' fees or manors were, however, even in the thirteenth century, estimated at 20*l.* sterling annually, so that an earldom must have been rated at 400*l.*, and a large barony at about 266⅔*l.*, or, to speak more precisely, at 400 marks, reckoning the mark at 13*s.* 4*d.* It is, therefore, probable that the Crown, before granting an earl's patent, required proof that the patentee possessed the revenues necessary to give him a certain relative superiority over the mass of the greater barons.

All who held a considerable number of knights' fees or manors, although not as many as were necessary for an earldom, were regarded as ranking among the greater barons; and we find that some families adhered from an

early period with an inexplicable degree of pertinacity to this Scandinavian and Norman titular name, which originally signified merely a free and independent man. To this body Magna Charta secured the privilege of receiving a personal and special summons to attend the national assembly, and thus distinguished them from the great mass of those who held lesser fiefs, and who were summoned collectively. Even at that period, a number of the Crown fiefs that had been granted by William the Conqueror had lapsed, either by attainder, alienation, death, or subdivision, so that when Edward I. issued his summonses to Parliament he was enabled, chiefly in consequence of the great political movement under Simon de Montfort, to pass over the representatives of many old families, whose landed property and influence would otherwise have given them the right of receiving a personal summons: while he, on the other hand, called to his council many foreigners, natives of France and Lorraine, who had risen to pre-eminence in his service. In addition to the distinction which is recognised in the Great Charter and in the "*Modus tenendi Parliamentum*," of being summoned on the ground of holding a *barony by tenure*, there was now added a summons by writ, or *barony by writ*, which became almost exclusively the mode by which the peers were called by special summons, and by right of which they sat and voted in the assembly. It was one of the prominent stipulations of Magna Charta that all those who subsequently appeared as members of the upper house, as, for instance, the archbishops, bishops, abbots, priors, earls, and the greater barons, should each be individually summoned by a royal writ to attend the national

council. Whilst, therefore, the necessity of possessing landed property of a certain value was gradually overlooked, and the titles of baron and earl, as well as that of duke, which was first created by patent in the middle of the fourteenth century, gradually came to be regarded as mere titular distinctions of nobility, the personal summons by royal writ appears to have been the principal requirement for enabling a nobleman to take part in the national councils. When, about the year 1400, a third distinction of rank was adopted, and the title of baron was conferred by *letters patent*, the barony by writ became also hereditary; and hence arose, about this time, the conception of an exclusive and independent peerage, the privileges of which were claimed by several noble families for the heads of their houses. The extent to which the families of men are subjected in the course of time to changes and extermination is forcibly illustrated by the fact that, at the present day, there are very few members of the House of Lords who can show, with any degree of certainty, by which of these modes the right of sitting and voting in that house was exercised by their ancestors in the fourteenth century, the brave contemporaries of those who took part in the wars between England and France.

It would appear that, in addition to the spiritual and temporal lords, those whom we should now designate as the Ministers of the Crown were also, from a very remote period, entitled to be present at the national council, as, for instance, those high dignitaries at court, with whose offices, moreover, the title of peer was generally associated, as well as the treasurer and the chancellor, and as assessors the chief justices who pre-

sided at the three great courts of Westminster. The latter, however, unless entitled to the rank by birth, creation, or office, were not peers, as they had merely a seat in the upper house, and no vote. They were also called upon to advise the monarch, and were required to give their counsel and aid to the Lords and Commons in regard to the special business under discussion.

It was the Greater Barons who, in the year 1215, drove their tyrannical and pusillanimous king to the last extremity, and compelled him to grant rights which had not hitherto been recognised by the monarchs of England. They, however, were themselves utterly worsted in the first attempt which they made to govern constitutionally in accordance with the stipulations they had enforced. A struggle, which was continued during three generations, was the consequence of their attempt to enforce, in defiance of the other constituent orders of the State, the most prominent of their stipulations, viz. the privilege of a personal summons to the national councils, and the right of being consulted whenever any extraordinary subsidies were demanded by the Crown. That age, and more especially the period preceding the close of the powerful movement that took place under the great Earl de Montfort, sufficiently shows that, even in the palmiest days of Norman ascendency during the middle ages, it was no longer possible to carry on a purely aristocratic form of government in England. It was after these events that the Crown succeeded, in addition to the prerogatives which it had saved in its hour of need, in acquiring a new support against an all-powerful nobility by having recourse to a class of persons whom the barons refused to recognise as their equals, although

they had, indeed, secured to them in the Great Charter a certain status, which De Montfort had endeavoured, although too late, to raise to a still higher level.

There had long existed an estate in the country which was alike dissatisfied with the pure despotism of the Crown, whose severity and weakness it had sufficiently experienced, and with the aristocracy, on account of the unavoidable egotism, the tendency to faction, and the thirst for acquiring feudal power, by which that body was actuated. And it is a memorable and great trait in the character of King Edward I. that he departed from the convictions and practices of his earlier years to associate with those whom he had once opposed, and was thus able, at the right moment, to aid in establishing the House of Commons on a legal basis. We will here pause to consider the individual constituents of which this body was composed, and the manner in which it gradually acquired the right of participating in the administration of public affairs.

We must again refer to Magna Charta. When the great spiritual and temporal lords, with whom originated the terms of this great national Charter, united in one compact body against the Crown, they came forward not only in their own name, but also in that of another estate of the realm, for whom they had secured certain rights, simultaneously with their own, although they, at the same time, assigned to this class a subordinate position in the State. The stipulation by which these rights are secured is comprised in the clause which guarantees that, besides the prelates, earls, and greater barons, all other free men holding in chief under the Crown must be summoned to the national council to give their assent

to the extraordinary subsidies demanded by the monarch, although with this essential difference, that they were not to be summoned by a special royal writ, but collectively by the sheriff of the county, or the bailiff of the hundred. Now, those who held in chief under the Crown undoubtedly belonged to the class previously designated as the Lesser Barons, who certainly held their land under the same rights and stipulations as the greater and more richly endowed barons, but who did not hold fiefs of sufficient value to entitle them to the privileges which the others enjoyed. They were originally the holders of only one of these small knights' fees, and sometimes of only a portion of one, more especially if it were included in the tenure of a large barony. There was another cause, however, which contributed almost simultaneously to augment the numbers and influence of this class of the community. During the Crusades, the idea of the knightly dignity had become firmly established among the nations of Western Christendom, and the different orders and corporations of chivalry had thus become amalgamated into one system, based upon a common principle of chivalrous valour, courtesy, and discipline. The different bands of armed men became everywhere the nucleus of the feudal armies, and in England, more especially, the princes began to avail themselves to a large extent of this power. Whoever was equipped as became a knight, without reference to birth, and whoever possessed sufficient means to bring a well-accoutred horse into the field, or to pay the corresponding amount of scutage, was soon regarded as a member of the knightly estate. It thus happened that while, on the one hand, the order of knighthood was composed of younger portion-

less sons of men belonging to the baronial class, and of esquires, or even of pages, who still awaited the honour of being dubbed knights, this class was, on the other hand, recruited from the ranks of the tenants and smaller landed proprietors. The service and order of knighthood consequently fused the lesser barons and tenants into one class, which the Crown regarded with constantly increasing favour, in proportion as it learnt to appreciate the advantage which might accrue to itself, when the great fiefs relapsed from attainder or any other cause, by permitting them to be subdivided, while it maintained the inalienability of the knights' manors. In the thirteenth century, a law was passed, which long continued in force, that every freeman who possessed 20*l.* sterling annually—a sum which, with the increase of wealth, was afterwards raised to 40*l.*—should join the order of knighthood. Thus, property and dignity, chief and under tenure, became merged together without reference to equality of birth, and fused into one general knightly class.

In the same manner as the Greater Barons had first combined in a body to oppose the Crown and then legally rallied round the monarch as members of the great council of the realm, so the knights now combined together within the ancient precincts of their several shires; and by their means those principles of self-government, which had never been thoroughly destroyed within the Anglo-Saxon districts of the country, acquired a more vigorous development; whilst, on the contrary, the power that had been vested in the king's sheriff, as the representative of the once all-powerful Norman Bailiffs, was continually being reduced within narrower

limits. The sheriffs and knights of the shire wielded whatever power the individual counties still possessed in regard to the administration of the law, and of the affairs of the local police, militia, and finances; and constituted the County Court, in which character they were recognised both by the monarch and by the State generally.

This condition of things was brought about as soon as the attempts of the Crown to govern exclusively by an aristocracy had failed, and when, in the place of this mode of government, it had become requisite to constitute a national representative body. Then, moreover, the order of knights who constituted the middle ranks of the landed proprietors could no longer rest contented with the stipulation set forth in Magna Charta, according to which they were summoned collectively and indiscriminately to the national assembly. This general mode of summons led, of necessity, owing to the extension of the kingdom, to a substitution of some for the many, and it thus became a custom to delegate to a few full powers to act for the whole. Thus, in accordance with the ancient precedents followed in each shire, a legal representation of the several counties was introduced into the great Council of State. King John and his son Henry III. had, on several occasions when they wished to treat with the entire body of the knights of a shire, summoned only three or four of the whole body as representatives of the rest. Some years after the signing of Magna Charta we find that, at first only in individual cases, but soon more regularly, two knights were sent to the general council of the nation as representatives of the counties, in obedience to a writ addressed to the

sheriff, as chairman of the county court, and by the election of the entire number of freehold voters. The electors, however, did not consist only of the under-tenants of the Crown and knights, but included all free-men of the county who were men of good repute, and who possessed landed property, or held in chief, in as far as they were entitled to take part in the judicial and administrative business of the county courts. In the fifteenth century, however, the electors were limited, by strict legal definitions, to all forty shilling freeholders, while, from the same period, it was required that no knight or landed proprietor should be elected unless he possessed an annual rental of 40*l.* sterling. The representation of the general landowners had, however, been securely established as early as the close of the thirteenth century, under Edward I.

Simultaneously with this body, another element of power had become developed with almost equal rapidity in the State. Although the towns had been assured in Magna Charta of their ancient rights and immunities, there was as yet no idea of allowing them to participate in the deliberations of the national assembly. There was, however, an exception in favour of the city of London, for in the clause that treats of the granting of extraordinary subsidies, its right to take part in these assessments was clearly defined. This special prerogative it owed to its vast preponderance in regard to size and wealth over the rest, even at that age, and while it ranked as a County within a County, the Wards of the city must be regarded as corresponding very nearly with the hundreds of the shires, or even with the counties of the kingdom. London not only chose its own sheriff, but

it elected the sheriff of the county of Middlesex, and its lord mayor. The aldermen, who were the representatives of the different wards, designated themselves as barons. Guilds of the several trades were formed from the burgher classes, with whom they competed, but not always in the most amicable manner, for equality in regard to civic and even political rights. For a time, we find the magistrates and citizens of London closely adhering to the nobility, who were then forcing the Crown to grant the prerogatives which they claimed. Notwithstanding all these circumstances, however, London never became wholly independent, like some of the cities of Germany and Flanders. Its efforts to secure a certain degree of independence ceased when it acquired a just share in the deliberation of matters of state; and as England had been spared from the fate of seeing the highest of her nobility converted into sovereign princes, it was in like manner saved from the destiny of having its civic communities elevated into free cities. Some of the provincial towns, of which many had risen in the course of the thirteenth century to political consideration, either as the seat of a bishop or on account of their trade and wealth, cherished the wish of acquiring the same immunities that were enjoyed by London; but they soon contented themselves with sharing in the local affairs of the county, and learnt to be satisfied with their own subordinate position in the kingdom. When the dissensions between the king and Simon de Montfort had broken out into open enmity, that high-spirited nobleman, undoubtedly, with the view of strengthening his cause by the support of the widely diffused middle classes, for the first time summoned delegates from the

towns, in addition to many knights of the shire, to attend the memorable Parliament which he called together in January, 1265, and at which the order of nobility, which was jealous of his power, was only sparingly represented. There were about twenty places included in his summons; but although this precedent was lost sight of in the reactionary period that succeeded, it was again followed by Edward I., the victorious opponent of De Montfort, who saw, with his usual provident sagacity, that the measure might contribute to the consolidation of his own power. He was desirous that civic representatives, by having an independent share in the assessment of the taxes, should be debarred from any right to advance subsequent objections to the mode of taxation—a practice which had been of frequent occurrence. An attempt was also made to establish the proposition that many of the towns and boroughs must actually be considered as fiefs of the Crown, on account of the fines which they paid in return for the privilege of independent municipal government, and consequently that they enjoyed equal rights and owed equal duties with the knights of the shires.

The summonses issued under Edward to the towns and boroughs differed considerably in different cases, being sometimes addressed to many, and at other times only to a few, of these corporations. Thus, in the Parliament of 1295, which was summoned during the war, when large subsidies were more especially needed, we find as many as two hundred civic representatives present; while on another occasion, when the subject under discussion was a question of feudal tenure, none of these representatives were summoned to the assembly. For a

long time, indeed, the civic was secondary to the knightly element in the state; and the smaller towns, which were closely connected with the affairs of the county, often showed considerable unwillingness to send representatives to Parliament. A long time elapsed, moreover, before the question of the mode of summoning the representatives of the several towns and boroughs could be established on the same firm basis as that which regulated the mode of summons for the knights of the shire. Many of these towns and boroughs fell into a state of perfect dependence upon certain noble or other influential county families on all matters connected with their representation in Parliament. Owing, however, to the greater independence and power of the city of London, the election there was vested in the hands of a few independent and noble families together with the civic corporations which they nominated, and the guilds which enjoyed the fullest municipal privileges.

It is a matter of great importance to England, and is a privilege which is not shared in by other nations, that the knights and civic representatives were fused together into one body, which constituted the Commons of the land. An influential cause of this fusion was, in the first place, the early separation of the order of knights from the Greater Barons or peers of the realm, and, in the next, the dependence of the provincial towns upon the counties in which they were situated. The knights of the shire held their court within these towns, and were thus brought into intimate relations with the burghers; while freehold property within the towns, moreover, enjoyed perfect equality with every other kind of freehold property, knights' manors could be alienated even

in favour of citizens, and even the rights of trade were not inseparably connected with the several guilds. Thus, these two classes of the population were intimately thrown together and intermingled in private life, while they had even in the middle ages made a most important advance towards the attainment of one and the same rank and status in the country. The clergy took part in the affairs and debates of the House of Commons until the Reformation, although, as early as the fourteenth century, in imitation of the organization of Parliament, the convocations of both the archiepiscopal provinces of Canterbury and York were separated into an upper and lower house. The clerical members of the House of Commons appear, however, to have occupied very much the same position as the judicial assessors in the Upper House, and to have been employed more especially to give the necessary information when questions came before the house in reference to ecclesiastical matters.

Thus then from the time of Edward I. we meet with the two groups which subsequently became developed into the Houses of Lords and Commons. The former of these comprise the materials from which the estates of the Imperial diet were formed in Germany, while the latter seems to have represented the German Provincial estates. Their origin and their various characters continue to be appreciable to the present day. A memorable circumstance connected with their development is, however, that the several paths which they have followed have not disunited them, as has elsewhere been the case, for, notwithstanding their separation into two bodies, they have actually been combined into one general

Parliament. The Upper House is the more ancient and the more distinguished of the two, and has permanently retained its pre-eminence, whilst even the name, by which both parts are conjointly designated, has been borrowed from the conferences held by the lords and prelates. It is, indeed, worthy of notice that the earliest instance of the use of the designation *Parliament* occurs in an Act of Henry III., in which that Prince designates the stormy meeting on the 15th of June, 1215, at which Magna Charta was granted, as the "*Parliamentum de Runemede.*" It is, therefore, connected with an epoch, at which noble lords and prelates, but, as yet, neither knights nor burghers, sat and voted in the great national assembly. The greater barons, who were invited by a separate and respectful summons from the crown, had from the first attended the assembly entirely at their own cost, while the commons, as the representatives of close corporations, and as poorer men, who were more intimately bound to their homes by the ties of trade and business, received a daily allowance from those by whom they were elected. This allowance was at first subject to great fluctuation. Thus, in the year 1296, the representatives of London already received the then exorbitant sum of ten shillings daily; and until the time of Edward III. each knight was paid four shillings daily, and every burgher two shillings, a scale of payment which was adhered to till the eighteenth century, when the practice of paying members was wholly done away with.

If we would inquire into the rights and duties which appertained to Parliament in the middle ages, we must consider the two groups separately and distinctly. When the king was no longer able to govern solely with the

help of his ministers, court officials, and favourites, the lords and prelates at first combined together to form a species of deliberative assembly. They thus constituted a sort of general council, conjointly with the ordinary and permanent council of the crown, known as the Privy Council. On this account the duties of both were originally much the same, with this distinction, however, that the more general council, which only assembled on special occasions, deliberated and passed resolutions, while the more limited council was especially the department for the administrative and executive business of the State. The former very soon, however, began to exercise a perceptible pressure on the latter, by exerting a certain amount of supervision over its proceedings. The recently instituted constitutional body endeavoured also gradually but successfully to predominate over the more ancient administrative department. There were many of the most important matters of state, regarding which the King's Privy Council no longer felt itself competent to decide on its own responsibility, and it therefore became necessary to have recourse from time to time to the more general council. The examination of all complaints, grievances, and petitions, addressed to the government, was in the course of time submitted to a commission of the lords, consisting generally, as we learn from the rolls, of one prelate, two earls, and two barons. As the King found it advantageous to choose his ministers and other officers of the crown from among the influential members of the upper house, this branch of the legislature acquired in time a share in the nomination to these important offices. It was, however, chiefly in reference to questions of judicial administration,

as in cases of appeal from the decision of the three great courts, that the crown began to refer to the general council. Hence it resulted that the House of Lords became the highest court of appeal in the land, with power to give judgment in regard to cases of every kind and persons of all ranks, while it moreover became a court for judging the peers of the realm, when towards the close of the fourteenth century, the idea of a peerage was firmly established, and the right of sitting and voting in the house became hereditary.

The rights and duties of the Commons were in the meantime being specially developed in another direction. It had, indeed, been enacted by the Great Charter that the lesser as well as the greater barons were to have a voice in granting extraordinary subsidies. Edward I. had, however, so far considered the towns and boroughs and the Commons generally, as to give them a direct voice in the assessments of imposts, in order to remove all pretexts for subsequent complaints of grievances; but even he was soon compelled to seek their counsel and aid in the settlement and enactment of state contracts and laws. They were therefore from that time forth summoned to attend the great national council, *ad faciendum et consentiendum*, although they still continued for a long time, not merely figuratively speaking, but in reality, to present their petitions humbly, on their knees, after the manner of profoundly submissive subjects. The landed proprietors who owned enormous flocks of sheep, and the citizen class who had grown rich in trading in wool, were especially well adapted to give advice in reference to the proper adjustment of the tolls, and the assessment of the taxes, which were

more and more needed in proportion to the increasing requirements of the Government. They thus naturally became the leaders in all matters connected with financial questions before they had been discussed by the Lords and Parliament; and we find that from the time of Henry IV. the Commons always took the initiative in regard to money bills. No very long period of time elapsed before they extorted the further concession that no law was to be considered valid, either in regard to themselves or their equals, until it had received their concurrence. Thus, while the country had at one time received its laws through royal edicts, or by resolutions of the king in council, it now became imperative that laws should, in accordance with the required constitutional form, be proposed in the House of Commons, and receive the concurrence of the Lords, and the assent of the Crown. It is self-evident that such important privileges as these could not have been acquired in a short period of time, nor without much violent opposition on the part of the crown and its ministry, and even, in individual cases, of the Church and nobility. The history of the whole of the fourteenth century bears witness to the amount of bitterness, strife, and confusion which had to be allayed before these results were attained; but, from the time of the great enactment of laws under Edward I. to the usurpation of the throne by the house of Lancaster, we find that notwithstanding all obstacles and impediments, the rights of the Commons, and, consequently, those of Parliament, were constantly increasing. The right of voting the subsidies led, during the warlike and costly reign of Edward III. to an interference on the part of the Commons with foreign policy;

and during the reaction under Richard II. it brought about the first attempt to remove some of the abuses of the administration, and to establish the responsibility of the ministers of the crown. We find, also, that unrestricted freedom of speech was insisted upon by the earliest speakers of the Lower House. Thus, then, the Greater Barons became consolidated into the body of the peers of the realm at the same time that the Lesser Barons supplied the constituents from which the Commons of England were developed. In a country where, since the days of William the Conqueror, so many rights and claims had become hereditary, a fixed mode of conducting public business was soon established, and a systematic routine followed in relation to the functions and details of its several branches. Thus, by the force of usage and precedent, all those principles on which the two bodies of Parliament were based, soon took such deep root, that neither the manifold changes of dynasty which occurred in the course of ages, nor the destructive contest among members of the Upper House, nor even the many systematically calculated attacks that have been made on the liberties of the Commons, and of the country at large, have been able to overthrow the Houses of Parliament, or even to deprive them of their privileges.

Amid all the mass of conflicting influences which characterises the dawn of Parliament in the middle ages, we can trace, at least externally, a tendency to consolidated order. Thus, as a general rule, the assembly met three times in the year, on the days anciently appointed for the meeting of the courts, as they were held under William the Conqueror, viz.: two weeks after the New

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Year, two weeks after Easter, and two weeks after Michaelmas; forty days before which periods, as required by the great charter, the writs of summons were issued with a clear specification of the time and place of meeting. It frequently happened, however, that at the appointed day, the number of members requisite for the due transaction of business was not present, in consequence of which the opening of the assembly had to be deferred until the more tardy and distant members had assembled, or in default thereof, had tendered their excuses, or paid the required fine. It was only when these preliminaries had been complied with, that the meeting was opened in the presence of the King, or of the person appointed to act in his name, and who was almost always a Prince of the blood. The King took his place on the throne, midway down the longer side of the hall, while on a bench at his right hand sat the Archbishop of Canterbury and the bishops of his province, in the order of precedence anciently established among them, and on his left the Archbishop of York and his suffragans. The earls and barons were seated in a similar order. At the foot of the throne the ministers and chief justices took their places at a marble table, with the chancellor on their right hand, and the lord treasurer on the left. It agrees entirely with the original character of the upper house as an enlarged council of state, that it should meet the king in an apartment of his own palace. Before this central group there appeared when they were called, the knights and burghers, standing with their speaker at their head. Then the chancellor, or one of the other ministers rose in his place, and made the opening address, which, as the speaker

usually belonged to the clerical order, was for the most part worded after the manner of an edifying sermon, although the reasons for which the assembly had been summoned, were in general laid down with much clearness, and wherever the reports are extant, we find that they throw a clear light upon the position of the country in regard both to its home and foreign policy. Hereupon two customary proclamations were issued by one of the two clerks of the Parliament, in the first of which, all persons, excepting only those employed on the King's service or on guard, were forbidden to bear arms during the sitting of the assembly, while the other prohibited all noises and sports in the neighbourhood. The King then addressed a few words from the throne to each one of the estates of the realm, whom he addressed severally and individually, exhorting them to deliberate and take counsel together conscientiously and zealously, so that they might answer before God for their acts, which ought all to be influenced by a desire for the King's honour and advantage, as well as their own. The two Houses then proceeded to business, each forming itself into a committee to consider and decide upon the petitions that had been laid before them. The Lords deliberated in the presence of the Sovereign, whose throne was erected either in the hall painted in the time of Henry III., or in the apartment of the palace at Westminster, which was known as the Whitehall; while the Commons, knights, and burghers, held their sittings either separately or conjointly, as the case demanded, in the chapter-house of the abbey, which they continued to occupy until a special place of meeting was at a subsequent period appropriated

to their use. It was a principle established by ancient usage, that the assemblies should not be held in secret, or in a dark place, but openly and publicly, where all who wished might be present; and, indeed, we frequently hear of the presence of indifferent and uninterested auditors at these meetings. The members met at eight o'clock in the morning, and an hour earlier on days of high festivals, in order that the whole body might first attend Divine service. Sundays, All Saints' Day, All Souls' Day, and St. John the Baptist's Day, were the only occasions on which the assembly did not meet. We find that other forms, which have continued to the present day, were enforced with much strictness from a very early period. Thus the peers kept their seats, excepting when they wished to address the assembly, when the person wishing to speak rose in his place, and spoke in such a position that he might be heard in all parts of the house. There was to be only one door of entrance and of exit for all the members. The order in which the proceedings were to be taken up was inscribed in the *Calendarium*, or order of the day's business. Thus it was a rule of the House, that when the State was engaged in war, the affairs of the war were to be first discussed, and then all other matters which concerned the king, his queen, and his children; next in order the general questions of the country were to be considered, among which, all that related to the enactment of laws was to take precedence of the rest, while private bills were to be considered last. The granting of the supplies demanded by government, and the consideration of private petitions, closed the business of the united Houses. No member could absent himself until

the last petition had been answered or transferred to the mixed commission, which sat during the recess of Parliament. The House did not separate until after the king, (who during the sittings could absent himself from town only on account of illness), had either accorded or refused his consent to the different bills that had been passed by the Lords and Commons. Before their final separation the members collectively attended high mass.

It is self-evident that different Parliaments must for a long time have varied considerably, not only in regard to the duration and importance of their sessions, but also in reference to the forms, in which the business of the assembly was conducted, and which very frequently underwent important modifications; for the two Houses of Parliament in reality constituted the theatre, in which were enacted all the momentous events of the true history of England and the great constitutional struggles, which continued for many centuries to disturb the country. The parliamentary system in its early phases was exposed to many fierce storms, but the pillars on which the edifice was raised have remained firm and unshaken, and notwithstanding the many changes which the lapse of ages has brought with it, the great national institution still retains much of its original form, and has hitherto victoriously bid defiance to the angry invectives and fierce attacks of its bitterest foes.

IV.

ENGLAND'S EARLIEST RELATIONS TO AUSTRIA AND PRUSSIA.

It would almost seem as if from the earliest periods of historical record, the relations of Great Britain with the Continent had assumed and retained a northern rather than a southern direction. When the Romans were compelled to evacuate the island, there arrived nations of a northern origin, as Jutes, Angles, and Saxons, who contended for, and soon successfully gained possession of the island from the Celts. The first foreign political relations established by the conquerors reacted strongly upon their own northern homes. For the Christian doctrines to which the Anglo-Saxons had been converted in the subjugated land of the Britons, were now carried by them into Friesland, the northern and central parts of Germany, and even beyond the boundaries which separate the Scandinavian from the German races. The power and magnificence of Charlemagne had irresistibly attracted to his court the insular Saxons no less than their continental brethren. Offa of Mercia was on friendly terms with the Emperor as their letters testify, while Egbert, the first founder of one united Germanic kingdom in Great Britain, had derived his liberal political views from his intercourse with the leading men of the Emperor's court.

Thus when the Saxons of the Continent succeeded to the inheritance of the universal supremacy that had hitherto belonged to Rome, the ancient alliance with the kindred races who dwelt on the opposite sides of the Channel was re-established on the closest footing. Otho the great, by his marriage with a granddaughter of King Alfred, cemented the first of the many matrimonial alliances, which have united the royal houses of England and Northern Germany for more than a thousand years. It would almost seem as if that costly present of a gorgeously illuminated Gospel, which King Athelstan received from his brother-in-law the Emperor and his sister, and in which their names are still inscribed, had constituted the first link in a hitherto uninterrupted chain of alliances. Throughout the whole of that century of Scandinavian pillage there existed moreover a long established and most beneficial commercial intercourse between the Thames and the opposite German coasts, which could not possibly have been interrupted either under the rule of the Danish dynasties or that of the early Norman kings.

Henry II. the first of the Plantagenets, who in his opposition to that spirit of Romanism, by means of which the Church endeavoured to secure to herself an undue amount of temporal power, involuntarily sought aid from ancient Saxon institutions, first laid the foundation of a system of English policy in connexion with the Continent, the threads of which may be traced throughout the whole of the century. The marriage of his daughter to Henry the Lion, the bravest of all the Guelphic princes, shows us the direction taken by the English domestic policy in the great contest between the Emperor and

the Pope, which was in fact a struggle between the principles of a unity and a multiplicity of powers. Richard Cœur de Lion, who, before and during his captivity in Germany, had been involved in the political interests of the Empire, used all his efforts to secure the nomination of his nephew Otho to the dignity of King of Rome. When this prince quarrelled with Rome, he made common cause with John of England, who had his own differences to settle with Pope Innocent III. This family compact received a severe check at the battle of Bouvines, but nevertheless the cities of Germany, and trade generally, continued to increase in importance under the long continued patronage of the Guelphic party. It is to this period that the cities of Flanders, the sea trade of the Dutch and Frisians, and the maritime ports of the Hanseatic confederation owe their rapid and prosperous development. The German princes, who by the disruption of the Imperial union and the struggles maintained by the reigning sovereigns with Rome, had acquired a much greater degree of independence than they had ever before enjoyed, now strove to outvie one another in the liberality with which they offered protection and immunities of every kind to the towns within their domains; and we even find that the different rulers of the districts in which maritime trade had been most rapidly developed, were often ready to make common cause together, and it was in this manner that England was constantly being brought into contact and alliance with Flanders, Brabant, Holland, Guelders, Juliers, Cologne, and Saxony. After the fall of the Hohenstauffen family, the title of King of Germany was borne by an English prince, the candidate of the Guelphic party, whose strength lay chiefly in the

Rhineland and the north-western part of the Empire. He was unable to restore the splendour of the Empire, and the only traces of the benefits conferred by his rule are afforded by the privileges which he granted in reference to the long-established trade between Germany and England, unless we include under that head certain architectural improvements which may still be traced in some of the fine cathedrals in the districts of the Rhine. Notwithstanding the daily decline of power of the Ducal House of Saxony, the old commercial relations with England continued uninterrupted, no slight proof of which was afforded by the fact, that Richard, King of the Germans, had recourse to mountaineers from the Hartz district to work his rich tin and copper mines in Cornwall. This intercourse, which had been equally enjoyed by the subjects of both countries, appears to have been interrupted during the next generation; for Edward I. was the last English monarch who addressed a Duke of Brunswick as his cousin. The rupture was, however, only apparent, for the commercial relations between England and Northern Germany continued to be maintained as heretofore, although they were no longer associated with any one definite royal house, and notwithstanding the attempts that were made from time to time to break off the long continued international communion. They were, indeed, intimately connected with the alternate preponderance of power, and the long-lasting struggles of the Guelphs and Ghibellines.

When Henry II. found himself involved in a contest with the Pope as well as with Becket, his interests and those of Frederick Barbarossa seemed for a short time to have been united at the meeting of the Diet at Würzburg,

held in the year 1165, but they were soon again as widely separated as ever. When after the fall of the Emperor Otho IV. the sons and grandsons of Henry the Lion failed in restoring the supremacy of their house in the Empire, and when the subdivision of their Saxon patrimony even endangered their position in Germany, England began, during the long and weak reign of Henry III., to seek protection against France by entering into some other alliance, on the stability of which it might rely. Thus in the year 1225, the English government for the first time made cordial advances towards the imperial house of the Hohenstauffen, who had acquired a firm footing in Southern Germany, and established its power both over the Empire and Italy. Notwithstanding the long and wearisome negotiations that were entered into by the ambassadors of both countries at Cologne, Ulm, and Frankfort, the treaty was broken off in consequence of the decided leaning evinced by Frederick II. towards a French alliance. The murder of Engelbert I. Archbishop of Cologne, who had been the most influential intercessor with the Pope and Emperor in favour of Henry III., seems also to have been the means of suddenly breaking off the negotiations that had been begun by this remarkable embassy. Ten years later, however, when the position of the Emperor Frederick had been essentially altered, he formed an alliance with Henry, which terminated in his marriage with Isabella, the sister of the English monarch. This marriage opened a prospect of a new and more brilliant alliance—the material results of which might have essentially benefited the districts of Southern Germany. The bitter contest which the Emperor had waged against Rome soon,

however, burst forth with renewed violence, and although his weakminded brother-in-law did not withhold his submissive advice by letter, he did not venture to afford him any more tangible proof of his support. The idea of forming a strong coalition against the temporal supremacy of the Popes was a question of policy, which the English had not yet been able to master, and the Crown, which was just then involved in bitter dissensions with Parliament, following the example of King John, appealed for counsel to the Court of Rome, which had adroitly contrived to uphold the opinions of the Guelphic party. Another cause of the decline of cordiality between the two sovereigns may have been the loss of Queen Isabella, who had died in giving birth to her second child. Some ten years afterwards, the power of the Hohenstauffen family was completely crushed, and the sons and grandsons of Frederick had sought and found a grave for themselves and their house on Italian ground, but still the policy of the Ghibelline party met with no sympathy in England.

It happened singularly enough, however, that the prince whom the English government had been most disposed to acknowledge as the successor of the lately deceased Richard of Cornwall in the German empire, was actually the representative of the Ghibelline claims. Alonzo the Tenth of Castile, surnamed the Wise, whose mother was a daughter of King Philip of Suavia, had once been elected by the dissentient princes of the empire in opposition to Richard, and on that occasion he had vainly endeavoured to gain the support and approval of his ally, Henry III. of England. When, however, that monarch and his brother Richard

were both dead, and the shrewd and politic young King Edward I. had ascended the English throne, his prospects assumed a more favourable aspect. He was, moreover, the brother-in-law of Edward, who had married his sister Eleanor of Castile. As soon as the young King and his consort had returned home from the Crusades, a meeting was speedily arranged between Eleanor and her brother, which took place in a small village at the foot of the Pyrenees, in the year 1273, when it is probable that the affairs of the German empire were made the subjects of discussion.

In the meantime, however, the German princes had on the 29th of September of the same year, elected the Suabian Count Rudolf of Hapsburg as their king. In the following spring, Pope Gregory X. expressed himself in favour of this prince at the council of Lyons, where he entirely repudiated the claims of the Castilian monarch. In the following year, however, Edward strongly advocated the cause of his brother-in-law with the Pope, who had been his companion in the Crusades, urgently entreating him to acknowledge his right to the German crown. He at that time still addressed Alonzo as King of the Romans, promising him aid both with counsel and men in his struggle with Rudolf, whom he designated as the "Count of Alemannia."

Scarcely a year had elapsed, however, before very different feelings were entertained towards this prince in England. It has frequently been lamented that foreign historians make scarcely any mention of Rudolf, but in as far as England is concerned, the remark is not applicable, for the annals of the times and numerous state papers afford sufficient evidence of the attention with

which public affairs in Germany were watched, more especially at the period of Rudolf's first accession to power. In the year 1276, King Edward had already begun to make overtures of friendship to him. Their interests perhaps may have coincided in relation to those portions of the south-east of France, over which, as the remains of the ancient kingdom of Burgundy, the German empire probably still retained well-grounded claims of suzerainship. Rudolf's patrimonial estates were situated in Alsace, and extended as far as the Jura chain, through the district which was subsequently known as Switzerland. Although Edward I. owned a less extensive territory in Languedoc than his ancestors Henry II. and Richard I. had possessed, whose influence had extended as far as the kingdom of Arles, he was closely connected with this district through family ties, for his mother was the daughter of a Count of Provence, and he was the nephew and cousin of the Counts of Savoy. Whatever the cause may have been, we at all events find these two princes suddenly engaged in the most eager diplomatic relations without giving a thought to Alonzo of Castile; the subject of these negotiations being nothing less than the settlement of a matrimonial alliance between two members of the numerous progeny, with which the royal houses of Plantagenet and Hapsburg were then blessed.

It would appear that the first idea of this marriage must have originated with Queen Anne, the consort of Rudolf; for when, at a somewhat later period, English ambassadors were accredited to the court of the German King, we find that they were expressly instructed to thank the queen more particularly for this happy

suggestion. It happened that Bishop Henry of Basle was at Vienna at this period, and as he had always stood high in Rudolf's confidence, he together with the imperial notary Andrew of Bode, Provost of Werden, received in September, 1277, full powers to settle this business in England, and to bring it as speedily as possible to a happy conclusion. The plan arranged was that Rudolf's son, Hartmann, Count of Hapsburg and Kyburg, and Landgrave of Alsatia, whose earlier bethrothal with Cunigunda, a daughter of the Bohemian King Ottocar, had been dissolved by the latter, was to be affianced to King Edward's daughter Joan; and we see by the many marks of favour shown to these ecclesiastics, how readily and eagerly the English monarch had met their advances; while he lost no time in sending a representative to the German court, in the person of Gerard of Grandison, Bishop of Verdun. The negotiations advanced so rapidly, that the preliminary compact was concluded in London as early as the 2nd of January, 1278; while the ceremony of betrothal was settled for the next festival of the Birth of the Virgin Mary, (September 8th,) unless the English emissaries, who were just then about to start for Germany, should fix on a more convenient time.

These ambassadors were charged to express on the part of Edward the most grateful willingness to agree to the proposed stipulations, at the same time that they were commissioned to announce his intention of giving his daughter a dowry of 10,000 marks; while he would be satisfied if the young prince Hartmann were on his side to present his bride with a nuptial gift of £2,000, and if he owned hereditary property to the

value of £10,000. He wished further that in consideration of the tender age of the princess, Hartmann would first come to England, as his daughter, who had been named Joan of Acre, from the place of her birth, was not yet six years of age, having been born during the Crusade in the spring of 1272, and was still under the care of her grandmother, the widowed Queen Joan of Castile. The ambassadors were further enjoined to secure a promise, that in case Rudolf obtained the imperial crown, Hartmann should succeed him as King of Germany; while they were directed carefully to observe the young man, and to gain whatever information they could obtain in regard to his natural disposition and general habits. A special clause recommended that they should endeavour to acquire trustworthy information in respect to his property, and the value of the land which he held in fief.

The conferences of the plenipotentiaries at Vienna were so successful that a definite promise was obtained from King Rudolf that he would make every sacrifice to ensure that his son Hartmann should, with the concurrence of the princes of the empire, obtain the kingdom of Arles; and he further expressed his intention of letting his son assume the title of King of the Romans as soon as he himself became Emperor of Germany, as he intended to reserve for his first-born son, Albert, the far more secure acquisition of the Austrian territories. He moreover pledged himself that the nuptial gift to be presented to the august Lady Joan should be augmented in proportion as his son's property and influence increased. Ten days later he confirmed all that his envoys had promised in his name, and he and his

Queen Anne, both declared themselves perfectly satisfied with the time appointed for the betrothal. On this occasion a remarkable document was drawn up, in which it was stipulated that the bride of his son should receive from the hereditary patrimony of the king a yearly income of one thousand silver marks as a marriage-dowry, together with an assignment of the sum of 1,000 marks on various of his strongholds, and other properties, according to the valuation that had been made by the Bishops of Verdun, Basle, and Lausanne, who were well adapted for the management of business of this nature. This settlement referred to a portion of the old possessions of the house of Hapsburg, and included the castle of Lenzburg, with the manors of Vilmeringen, Sur and its appendages, the towns of Arau and Mellingen, the castles of Casteln and Willisau, the towns of Sempach and Sursee, the bailiwick of Münster, the town of Zug with the manor and office appertaining to it; the valley of Aegeri, the valley of Schwitz with the estates of Kiburg and Froburg and its appendages; the manor of Art and its farms; and, with few exceptions, the whole of Argau, as it had been held by Count Hartmann the younger, of Kiburg, by the king's father, Albert, and his cousin, Count Everhard of Hapsburg, with all the arable and waste lands, ways and commons, meadows and waters, and with all the rights and privileges thereto appertaining. The ordinary provisions in case of the premature death of either of the parties was added, and the document confirmed, not only by the bishops present, and some other spiritual and secular dignitaries, but also by Rudolf and his sons, Albert and Hartmann. After the

receipt of this contract, King Edward likewise settled 10,000 marks as a nuptial-gift on his daughter, who continued henceforward to reside with her parents in England.

Public affairs would probably have assumed a very different character if the two noble princes had been able, without delay, satisfactorily to carry out the views which they entertained in reference to the restoration of the kingdom of Arles. The English monarch had indeed received from his new ally the requisite authority for helping to settle the differences which had broken out between Rudolf and the Count of Savoy. But who can decide whether Rudolf's schemes were directed with the view of benefiting the empire or his own dynasty? He was, at any rate, soon afterwards compelled to enter upon his great campaign against Bohemia, whose haughty monarch had thwarted him in many ways, and had further irritated him by sending his daughter, the first-betrothed of Prince Hartmann, to a convent. On the 26th of August Ottocar was defeated, and lost his life on the field of battle, after which the head of the house of Hapsburg took possession of his kingdom. These events were certainly the means of delaying the final settlements of the English stipulations, although King Edward was not behindhand in the expression of friendly sympathy and satisfaction at the news of the great victory. An English book of the household expenses of the palace contains a notice of the arrival at the Court of Westminster of Rudolf's King-at-Arms, Herthelm, who had been despatched to announce these tidings; and we find that this person, as well as a musician and another herald of the King of Germany,

were both handsomely remunerated on Sunday, the 30th of October.

On the 8th of November Edward wrote to the Bishop of Verdun to express his joy at the triumph of his royal ally, for which he has offered up his thanks to the Almighty. The bishop, it would appear, had advised the king himself to write to Rudolf, and this, he says, he would most assuredly have done had not the news of the victory been made so universally known by the German messenger, that it was no longer worth while to write about it. Then the bishop is again urgently entreated to lend a helping hand to bring about the marriage without delay. In another letter of the same date, he begs that, as Rudolf is going to send his son forthwith to England, the bishop, who has contributed so much to obtain these happy results, will not fail to be present at the wedding. He is most anxious, he says, to consult him in regard to the value of the landed property that has been assigned to Hartmann and his future consort, and regarding which he, strangely enough, has as yet received no information, although, as he adds, he by no means feels any uneasiness on that account.

On the same day he writes to inform his future son-in-law that, in compliance with the wishes of his august father, he sends him the letters of safe conduct which he has obtained for him from Philip III. King of France. He begs, therefore, that Prince Hartmann will at once inform him of the time of his approaching arrival, that he may, on the appointed day, send some of his officers to meet him at Witsand, on the coast of French Flanders, and thus provide him with an honourable retinue, worthy of his dignity.

It is probable that Bishop Gerard wrote to excuse himself, for there is a letter extant in which the king expresses his regret that illness and other pressing circumstances should have prevented the bishop from paying his hoped-for visit to England. The Bishop of Basle has given him information that he is awaiting the arrival of the English messengers in his diocese, but there had, unfortunately, been some error of form in their credentials, which had obliged them to send home for further instructions. At the end of that year Bishop Gerard died.

It happened, moreover, that notwithstanding the sincere endeavours on the part of Edward to effect a satisfactory understanding between the parties, the feud with Savoy was protracted from year to year on account of the unjust usurpation of several estates belonging to the empire. Edward had family interests in the same quarter, for Margareta, the widow of St. Louis of France, a sister of his mother, and a near relative of the Count, had written, urgently entreating the king to secure peace before he thought of this marriage, while Eleanor, the Queen Dowager, informs him that she has heard that there is a project for concluding a marriage between Rudolf's daughter, Clementia, and a grandson of the King of Sicily, an alliance which she thinks will prove detrimental to her hereditary rights in Provence. She therefore begs that her son will write to Rudolf, in order that the latter may confirm her claims before anything further is done. Edward had already exerted himself on her behalf in Germany, but she seems after this to have dropped her pretensions for a time, and it is only in the year 1282 that she again reverts to the subject in a letter, addressed to her royal son.

The obstacles on King Rudolf's side were still apparently due to the various successful campaigns in which he had for a long time been almost incessantly engaged in the eastern parts of his realm. He could not even spare the retinue which he must have given his son for his marriage-journey to England. There is nothing, therefore, to justify the assumption that the German King had endeavoured, from dishonest and bad motives, arising from the still pending difficulties with Savoy, to postpone, or even wholly to prevent the marriage. It would rather appear as if the young Prince Hartmann, who was to inherit this Swiss territory, and who had already been designated as King of Burgundy, had himself taken the field against Count Philip. We find among the English State papers belonging to that period some documents which give us a certain insight into the character and motives of this young prince. Thus, for instance, he once addressed a letter to King Edward, whom he designates as his father and lord, and whom he thanks with sincere filial respect for all the goodness he had shown him in promoting his marriage, promising that he will endeavour to become more and more worthy of the king's parental care, and more loving and obedient towards him. It is in conformity with an order of his father that, on the day of his writing, viz. the 10th of September, he is to go with his brother to Austria, where it is to be hoped the latter may be elevated to the rank of duke. He expects to return by All-Saints' Day, and he will then anxiously await the arrival of the messengers, who are to be sent from England to meet him at Basle. His tutor, the Master Peter, who is probably the writer of this very bombastic

and incorrectly expressed letter—for the landgrave must have been a mere boy at this time—had been instructed to explain this matter more fully by word of mouth to the King of England.

Edward, whose impatience could no longer be concealed, probably received by the hands of the same messenger a very explicit letter from the Bishop of Basle, in which the writer endeavours in various ways to excuse Prince Hartmann's protracted delay. He writes, that being mindful of the words which Edward himself had repeated to his consort Eleanor, on the occasion of the signing of the contract of betrothal, by which they declared that they confided their daughter Joan, not so much to the young Prince Hartmann as to him, the Bishop holds himself solemnly pledged to bring this business to a satisfactory conclusion. He had, therefore, on more than one occasion earnestly entreated the young prince to betake himself to his father, and urge him to put him in possession of the hereditary property that had been assigned to him. Prince Hartmann believed that he would return to Vienna about All-Saints' Day, when he thought he should be able to give the English Ambassadors a reply which would be perfectly satisfactory to their master. The Bishop explains to Edward that the first delay which prevented the fulfilment of Prince Hartmann's visit to England was owing to illness, the second to a number of pressing engagements, while the third, he allows, was due to laziness and carelessness. The latter could not, therefore, be so easily excused, but still the Bishop hopes that the king, whose sound and mature judgment is the admiration of the whole world, will not on this account withhold from

him, as his faithful servant, his future good will. He would rather have been deprived for two years or more of his diocese, or even of the favour of King Rudolf, than deceive the royal English lady in this matter. He would himself most willingly have come to England, had he not been heavily burdened with debts since the campaign against the king of Bohemia; and he, moreover, is afraid that his royal lord and master may need his services in his contests with Hungary, whose prince has contumaciously set himself in opposition to the Romish Church and the Catholic Faith.

At this stage of the proceedings, when there was a cessation of warlike operations during the winter season, the unexpected and most sudden death of Prince Hartmann put a stop to all further discussions. On the Tuesday before Christmas-day, the 21st of December, 1281, the young landgrave, who was only eighteen years of age, had embarked at the fortress of Breisach on the Rhine, intending to go down the river to meet his father. A thick fog soon closed in around them, and the boatmen having got out of their course, the vessel struck near Rheinau against an overhanging tree, and was instantly capsized, when Prince Hartmann with most of his retinue found a watery grave. This mournful intelligence was carried, with all speed by a messenger, whose name is not given, to the king of England, in order that he might not be ignorant of the event when he answered the letter, which he had shortly before received from Rudolf.

With this catastrophe all matrimonial plans naturally came to an end. King Rudolf, who was deeply affected by the death of his son, did not write again t

Edward until the 17th of August, 1282, when he excuses his long silence on the ground of his grief for the severe loss he had sustained. He assures him, however, repeatedly, that this event shall not sever the bonds of friendship by which they have hitherto been united; and we do, in fact, meet with several proofs of the friendly and political relations that were maintained between the two monarchs.

In one instance Edward intercedes with the King of the Romans on behalf of a Rhenish knight, who has not been able to obtain a fief which he expected, and shortly afterwards we learn that the property in question has been made over to him. On another occasion, strange to say, the mediation refers to Castile, which was at that time disturbed by Sancho's insurrection against his feeble father, Alonzo. In a letter, addressed by the young prince to Edward, he announces that he is aspiring to the honour of forming an alliance with a daughter of the German king, and at a subsequent period we find the English monarch interceding with Rudolf to secure a free passage through Germany for Alonzo's ambassador, Gonzalvo Rodriguez.

The differences with Savoy were now about to be finally adjusted, for it would appear that Edward did not prosecute the business of mediating between the two parties with thorough earnestness until after the death of Prince Hartmann. He now despatched a special embassy, at the head of which stood Otho of Grandison, a relative of the bishop of Verdun, and a man who took an active share in all the diplomatic negotiations of Edward's reign, and who ultimately became the founder of one of the noble families of

England. Bishop Henry of Basle had been entrusted with the management of the negotiations on behalf of Rudolf, but when peace was finally concluded in July, 1283, both parties turned to the wealthy king of England, entreating him to reward with the gift of some rich benefices the services of certain ecclesiastical agents, who had distinguished themselves by their unwonted zeal in the cause of their employers.

In a few months war again broke out, and Rudolf advanced in person against Peterlingen. To this period we must probably refer a letter addressed to Edward by Philip, in which the latter praises his nephew and thanks him heartily for his long continued endeavours to effect a reconciliation, while he, at the same time most bitterly complains that Otho of Grandison had not received an audience from Rudolf, who had absolutely made an incursion into the territory of Savoy, and began to devastate the country with fire and sword. The Count can see no escape from his impending fate, unless Edward will hasten to his aid, and assist him with the strong arm of his power. But about the end of the following December, before the English monarch could afford the assistance which his uncle sought, the two contending princes seem to have found a way of settling their affairs between themselves without his intervention.

During the latter years of Rudolf's life, the evidences of the intimate relations that had so long subsisted between these two sovereigns, became less and less frequent, and seem to have been limited to questions on which the interests of Germany and England will always be most closely united. In the differences between the

Wendish principalities and cities, and Brandenburg, Rudolf had shown himself inclined to favour the interests, which were represented by the city of Lubeck. And thus we find him on one occasion interceding with Edward in favour of the Lubeck owners of certain cargoes that had been confiscated in England, in accordance with the laws of flotsam and wreck. In a letter treating of more important matters, and bearing the date of 1285, he again advocates the cause of the Lubeckers and their Hanseatic allies against King Eric of Norway, surnamed the priest-hater, who had taken strong measures against the German mercantile towns, which threatened to put an end to their trade with Scandinavia. Rudolf and the Hanseatic towns were anxious to secure assistance from Edward, and hoped that he would be induced to forbid all exportation from England to Norway, and thus compel the Norwegian monarch to yield to their demands. This is the last letter extant addressed by Rudolf to Edward. If the death of Hartmann had contributed to weaken the peculiar alliance that the English had formed with the powers of southern Germany, the inconsiderable interests of the House of Hapsburg in the northern part of the empire were inadequate to cement such stable alliances as those which the Guelphs and other princes in the north-west of Germany had been able to form with the Plantagenets and their territories. Very different and very much more varied were the relations which existed during the short reign of Adolphus of Nassau. King Albert, the ally of Philip le Bel of France, on behalf of whom we find him concluding peace with England, could not possibly be on very

friendly terms with Edward. Only on one occasion do we hear of an ambassador being sent by him to England, and we may well question, whether it ever had been the earnest wish of Rudolf to set aside this first-born of his house in favour of the prematurely deceased Prince Hartmann, and by nominating the latter his successor in the Empire, thus to promote the establishment of an European combination, such as was meditated by the projected matrimonial alliance between the houses of Hapsburg and Plantagenet.

After this, more than a hundred years passed before any member of the Hapsburg family was again placed at the head of the German empire. The international relations during the reign of the Bavarian and the Luxemburg dynasty deserve special consideration. It was not until the House of York had been connected by the ties of friendship and marriage with the Burgundian Dukes, and when the first of the Tudors had made common cause with Maximilian I, that the families manifested any disposition to resume their former relations of amity; but notwithstanding these friendly dispositions, the marriage of King Philip II. of Spain with Mary of England was the only matrimonial alliance that was ever concluded between the English royal family, and the House of Hapsburg. It was no bond of affinity, no similarity of spiritual and material interests, but exclusively the promptings of State policy, that could at remote periods, unite the destinies of Austria with those of the British Islands.

Essentially different are the germs and subsequent development of those relations, which were formed, even in ancient times, between England and Prussia. Until

recent days, we hear of no matrimonial alliances between these two powerful dynasties, nor of any attempt to combine in one common policy in relation to the rest of Europe. There is, indeed, no want of personal goodwill, but it results for the most part only from affinity of race, and the intimate intercourse which has always subsisted between the people of both countries. The circumstance, that the original territories of the Prussian monarch are situated in northern Germany, and that the immigration of Low Saxons drew the Slavo-Lettish districts into more extended relations of trade and social intercourse, connected the lands of the Baltic, by means of their commercial relations, closer with the Saxon population of England. The towns of the North German Hanseatic league, even before they had entered into that confederation which subsequently acquired a world-wide renown, were the means of keeping up the threads of intercourse with those Saxons who had emigrated to the British Island; they had likewise a distinguished share in the German colonization of the countries of the Baltic. It is worthy of notice, that it was from these towns that the formation of the Order of Teutonic knights was destined to originate. It was merchants from Bremen and Lubeck, who first pitched their canvass tents beneath the walls of Acre, and extended to German pilgrims the blessings of shelter, safety, and comfort, amid the heat and pestilence of an eastern climate. At the very point where the energy of the Crusaders culminated, a German brotherhood had dedicated itself to the Virgin Mary, and drawn together the remains of a German hospital, which for seventy years had lingered on at Jerusalem, surrounded by

difficulties and obstacles of every kind. Thus, then, a crying evil was remedied, for while the knights of St. John devoted themselves more especially to the care and protection of Italian pilgrims, and the Templars to those of France, there had been no similar corporation of a semi-spiritual and semi-warlike character, which advocated the cause and cherished the interest of the great Germanic nation. This Order was never destined, however, to attain any great degree of prosperity, compared with its older and more powerful associates. This may perhaps have been occasioned by the fact, that in the Crusades of the western nations to Palestine, people of Romanized descent were far more numerously represented than the purely German tribes. Indeed, this new Order, in addition to the Emperor and some few German princes, had probably no patrons, unless we except the Pope. Richard Cœur de Lion, under whom the knights of St. John and the Templars began to lay the foundation of their noble possessions in England, appears to have been unfavourable to the Teutonic knights; but although they never acquired actual property in the English territories, they were destined in the course of time to enter into much closer relations with England, than the more specially Romanist orders.

We must seek the explanation of this fact in their energetic colonization of the north-eastern districts of Germany, in the settlement of the Teutonic knights in Europe, and the intimate connexion which existed between their admirable grand master, Hermann von Salza, and the Emperor Frederick II. Similar confederations, half clerical, half chivalrous, had already

arisen, as the champions of Germanism in Moravia and Prussia, but they soon sank under the weight of the task which they had undertaken, until the year 1227, when a considerable portion of the knights of this Teutonic Order had been called upon under their master, Hermann von Balk, to afford their assistance against the Prussians. Salza, however, understood how to promote the interests of all his subjects by his clever and efficient pleadings with the Emperor. He had made himself indispensable to Frederick by his energetic devotion in the hard struggle with Gregory IX., and had shown himself a true mediator between the two contending heads of Christendom; and after having taken an active share, as a prince of the empire, in the most important affairs of Germany, he now, from his position at the imperial court, directed the transference of his Order from the Holy Land to the inhospitable shores of the Baltic—an event which has proved of most momentous import in its results to future ages. Hermann bore the reputation of being a true statesman and a skilful diplomatist, well versed in the reciprocal relations of the different rulers and states of Europe; but it is perhaps less well known, that he was on one occasion accredited as an ambassador at the court of Henry III. of England, at the time when the Emperor was seeking the hand of a princess of the royal house of Plantagenet. He, in common with the celebrated Peter de Vigny, went to the English Court to settle the marriage of the Emperor with Isabella in the year 1235, on which occasion he was not only received in the most honourable manner, as beseemed his rank and services, but he very probably at the same time procured the donation of that annual stipend of forty marks,

which for more than a hundred years afterwards was regularly paid from the treasury at Westminster to the Teutonic knights in Prussia, in aid of their labours. The English sympathies in favour of this order were no doubt cherished and encouraged by Richard, Earl of Cornwall, both in his capacity of Crusader and King of the Romans, and still more by Edward I., who himself took part in the last attempts that were made to save to Christendom the Syrian stronghold of Acre, and who, throughout all his life, upheld the cause of the Cross with a genuine spirit of chivalry, in all the encounters that took place with the followers of the Crescent. During the reign of these monarchs, the old bonds that had once united the German cities and the Teutonic knights were more closely drawn. The colonization from Bremen and Lubeck had a special influence on the increase of the acquisitions of the Cross. Danzic, Elbing, and other Hanseatic emporiums of trade, were rising into prosperity in the Prussian territories, and although differences were not wanting with the recently established Order, more particularly in regard to the monopolies in trade, granted to the mother-cities, their interests were in the main identical, especially in regard to their foreign policy, and most of all, perhaps, to their relations with England. The great privileges which had been granted by Henry III. and Edward I. were soon shared in by the trading subjects of the Grand Masters, Hartmann von Heldrungen, and Conrad von Feuchtwangen. And whatever slight dissensions there may have been among them, we find that the Prussians and the people of the Hanseatic towns were, except on rare occasions, always firmly united together when they met in London, where

they were all included under the general term of the "Easterlings."

It was not until the fourteenth century, when the middle classes had begun to assert their freedom in England, and when English merchants and English maritime trade were beginning to compete with the commerce of every other part of the known world, that the want of relation was first keenly felt, which existed between the great privileges which the Hanseatic traders had managed to acquire for themselves in foreign lands, and the suspicious distrust which they showed to all foreigners who attempted to take part in the monopoly of the Baltic trade. The English naturally desired to possess similar rights to those which they granted to others in their own seas, and they had already for some time established emporiums on the coast of Norway, and had, in common with the other Hanseatic traders, acquired the right in Scania of fishing over a certain extent of water, and of salting their herrings on shore. From these unequal privileges arose those differences, which lasted beyond the middle ages, and which have not a little contributed to the downfall of the Hanseatic Confederation. The Prussian cities occupied in the meantime a remarkable position, in being dependent, on the one hand, on Lubeck, as one of its colonies, while on the other hand, they recognised the Grand Master and the Order of the Teutonic knights as their feudal chiefs. The interests of both parties were necessarily sometimes at variance; for while the Hanseatic League desired to come to an understanding with England, the Order, at any rate as long as it was at the height of its prosperity, was anxious to be the head of a

perfectly independent policy, even in regard to the British dominions.

This complication of interests rose to a dangerous height at a time when England, after having long enjoyed the advantages of the far-sighted policy of the brilliant reign of Edward III., fell under the rule of Richard II., whose incapacity and minority helped to undermine his throne on every side, whilst Prussia in the meanwhile was under the sway of the renowned Winrich von Kniprode. These two princes undoubtedly exchanged civilities and presents of every kind, the one sending his royal friend beautiful falcons, and the other reciprocating with the gift of costly stuffs: but the intercourse between their subjects was soon sensibly affected, chiefly through those disturbances of government by which England was then distracted. The authorities in that country took advantage of the state of passing events to raise the duties on foreign trade, and to lay an unjust embargo upon goods coming from the Hanseatic towns, while the common seamen, incited by a genuine English hatred of foreigners, sought every opportunity of picking a quarrel with the Hanseatic traders or the Prussians in the ports where they met, whether at home or abroad, going not unfrequently to the length of robbery and murder. It was, therefore, decided at a meeting of the Council at Lubeck, in the year 1379, that all relations of trade should be suspended until the old condition of things was re-established. The consequence was that every article of English produce in the Baltic had an embargo laid upon it, while the trade with Prussia, where indeed there had always been most ground for complaint, was entirely suspended for several

years. The noble Grand Master remained firm and unshaken in his policy, although he lost no opportunity of trying to impress better principles on the King of England, his uncle the Duke of Lancaster, and the civic authorities of London. His successor, Conrad Zöllner von Rotenstein followed in his footsteps, so that the merchants on both sides were doomed to feel most sensibly the evils of this suspension of trade. Attempts were, however, made in the year 1385 to arrive at more comprehensive arrangements by means of negotiations, and the English were the first to draw up a series of complaints; while the Prussians, less disposed to adopt conciliatory measures than the Hanseatic traders, who hoped to effect a compact on the ground of their ancient privileges, advanced many countercharges of their own. Until the English would agree to bring their woollen stuffs under less limited conditions to the Elbing market, the exportation to England of the most important Baltic products, such as corn, wood, tar, and potash, was strictly forbidden. It was not till the year 1388 that any understanding was arrived at, when the Hanseatic towns and the English traders having found these disturbances of trade perfectly intolerable, both parties saw themselves obliged to make common cause against similar proceedings in Flanders. At length, on the 21st of August, a new treaty of commerce was signed at Marienburg between England and Prussia, in which provision was made for compensation for all the inconveniences that had been suffered, for the adjustment of further differences by legal measures, and for the continuance of the unmolested intercourse which had formerly existed. The advantages of the

monopoly remained entirely on the side of the East Germans, as long as the Steel-Yard in London maintained its extraordinary privileges, and it needed all the violent disturbances of the fifteenth century, when the Order fell under the power of Poland, and England had been almost destroyed in the wars of the Roses, before the relations of commerce could be thoroughly and effectively remodelled.

Before these measures could be effected, however, a peculiar intercourse of another kind had been established between the two countries. The support which England had afforded, from the days of Hermann von Salza, in the Crusades against the heathens, had never been entirely suspended; but had, on the contrary, received a new and more animated impulse after the cessation of the Crusades in the East, and was now directed towards the opposite ends of Europe, both against the Moors in Spain and the Lithuanians in Prussia. English knights and lords, in the fulfilment of their vows, or to satisfy their thirst for adventures, followed the same routes and traversed the same districts which had been long trodden by their mercantile countrymen in the prosecution of their commercial undertakings. The pleasant sketch that Chaucer has drawn of the knight of those days shows how much it was then the fashion to go forth on such expeditions to Prussia, and how familiar the use of certain words connected with German travel had become; for the poet says—

> "Ful often tyme he hadde the bord bygonne
> Aboven alle naciouns in Pruce.
> In Lettowe hadde he *reysed* and in Ruce."

Richard II. when he endeavoured to come to some arrangement with the Grand Master of the Teutonic knights, expressly refers to this fact, and says it ought to be remembered with gratitude, that many English knights and squires, without heeding the risk to life and property which they incurred, have at all times been ready and willing to help the German knights in their contests with the unbelievers.

No sooner had these commercial difficulties been removed, than the English began to resort to the country even more frequently than of old. A prince of the royal blood, the eldest son of John, Duke of Lancaster, who was then known as the Earl of Derby, and who subsequently raised himself to the throne as the first of a new dynasty, headed an expedition of this kind in the year 1390. He may perhaps have been led to the idea by the example set by his maternal grandfather, Henry, Duke of Lancaster, who had gone to Prussia in 1352; certain it is that throughout the whole of his life, this prince showed a strong inclination to fight as a soldier of the Cross; he may also very probably have found it expedient to absent himself for a time from home, as he had already begun to take a part in the political opposition that had been raised against the misrule of his cousin Richard II. Whatever his reasons may have been, the prince, as we learn from his own circumstantial diary of the expenses of his journey, undoubtedly left England during the summer of that year, and embarked at the head of several hundred men, including knights and soldiers, on board some Prussian vessels, reaching Danzic on the 10th of August, where he procured the equipments and supplies necessary to enable

him to reach Königsberg with all possible speed. From thence he was to proceed under the guidance of Engelhard Rabe, the Marshal of the Order, against Lithuania, which had been allied with Poland; the object of the expedition being to reinstate the banished Duke Witowd. They now only waited for the arrival of the foreign volunteers from Germany, France, and England, and when all were assembled, the baggage and supplies were sent by ship along the Haff, while the knights and their retinue set forth in the latter end of August, through the desolate districts of Kau on the Memel, where they appear to have had a hot engagement with the enemy on Saturday, the 27th. The fortress of Wilna was beleaguered all the month of September, until the bad season of the year brought the campaign to a close without any special result. The English Earl returned to Königsberg on the 20th of October, and we learn from accounts which he had to settle there for the transport and keep of his men, that at least one of his men had been killed in battle, that three youths, the sons of a Lithuanian nobleman, had fallen into the hands of the English prince, and that two Prussian knights were by order of their Marshal in attendance upon the Earl.

Henry spent the next three or four months in Königsberg, and seems to have installed himself regularly there for the winter season. We find that the interval between Christmas and the Epiphany was spent in accordance with the English custom, in feasting, sports, and merriment of every kind. He would not, however, undertake a second expedition against the heathens, but devoted several weeks to

travelling through the country. It was in the course of this journey, in February 1391, that he passed through Braunsberg and Elbing to Marienburg, whence he went to Dirschau, and then down the Vistula, to Danzic. He did not see the aged Grand Master, Zöllner von Rotenstein, for he had died of some lingering disease in the month of August. His successor, Conrad von Wallenrod, was not chosen till the 12th of March, when his election by the knights took place at Marienburg, and he lost no time, in accordance with the usual custom, of making a present of several falcons to the foreign prince, who after fighting so bravely for the Order was now about to leave Prussia. Henry spent the whole of March at Danzic, where he was probably detained by illness, as we infer from an indication given us by the keeper of his accounts, from whom we learn other things still more worthy of notice. The Earl of Derby's herald had been despatched to demand from Wladislav Jagello, the King of Poland, the restitution of two English knights, who had fallen into his hands during the war. An English herald also arrives with a message from Henry's uncle, the Duke of Gloucester, who had started in the same year on a similar crusade, but who had gone no further than Norway, from whence he had returned home; and lastly, the Earl receives the news, through an English sea-captain, that his consort has given birth to her fourth son, Humphrey, the future Duke of Gloucester.

Henry spent the Easter at Danzic, on which occasion he gave rich alms to the four principal churches of the town, in return for which Pope Boniface IX. granted him absolution from his vow to take part in the

Crusades. Soon afterwards he embarked on his homeward voyage, and after having safely landed at Hull, he hastened to his castle at Bolingbroke.

When this prince ten years afterwards became King of England, he displayed a thorough acquaintance with the condition of public affairs in Prussia, during the many very complicated negotiations which arose between his own country and the districts on the Baltic. He was also the last prince of any reputation who made a voyage to the North Sea, and on this account special attention is due to the relations which subsisted between Henry IV. and the Prussian authorities.

The strong material basis of these international relations was not therefore wholly deficient in some elements of romance; for the people of these two countries were early united together, and long maintained a reciprocal intercourse, such as Austria, from her position on the southern boundary of Germany, where she had to maintain a defensive attitude in respect to the Slavonic nations, was never able to establish with regard to England. It was not until many ages afterwards that the bonds of a family union, which Rudolf and Edward had once been so anxious to cement, were united between these royal houses; although from an early period of the middle ages we find different ancestors of the Hohenzollern family, as if in anticipation of the closer union that was to be effected at a future period between their descendants, brought into close contact with the policy and personal interests of the Kings of England. Thus Burggrave Albert the Handsome, of Nuremberg, was one of the German nobles who helped Edward III. to gain

his splendid victories over the French; while at the court of Henry V. and of his son Henry VI., no foreign prince was better known than Frederick I., Elector of Brandenburg, whose far-sighted policy had raised him to the rank of the first politician in the Empire of Sigismund.

V.

THE EMPEROR LOUIS IV. AND KING EDWARD III.

THE remarkable degree of development which the nations of Europe attained during the fourteenth century clearly manifests the extent to which the fate of two nations, such as Germany and England, who are allied by race, may differ from one another, and the points at which the consciousness of a unity of origin may again revive long dormant associations of affinity.

When the two brightest lights of Christendom, the Pope and the Emperor, had begun to pale amid the dark storms of the agitated period that had just passed, and the brightness of the one had long dimmed that of the other, states which had hitherto revolved like stars of lesser magnitude round their primary planets, now necessarily acquired pre-eminence and significance of their own. France and England had successfully taken the lead in opposing the unbounded pretensions of Rome, advanced by Boniface VIII., and the former of these powers had even reduced the papal chair to temporary dependence by forcing it into a state of Babylonish exile at Avignon. The greatest emperors of ancient times never succeeded in effecting such a result as this. The imperial dignity had, however, been thrown completely in the background

since the downfal of the Hohenstauffen family; and from the two sections which hitherto had constituted the Empire, there now arose a number of minor divisions, which were all striving to grasp at supreme power—and since the death of Rudolf of Hapsburg, the choice of the Electors had already elevated three different families in succession to the imperial throne. The exclusive and almost domestic policy of the Hapsburg dynasty, which was even at that time most injurious to the entire body of the empire, as well as the ungenial personal character of Albert, appears to have removed the last chance of maintaining a hereditary succession to the imperial crown, and the Electorate body now turned their eyes from the south-east to the west of the Empire for a successor to the throne. But even the vigorous and conscientious policy by which Henry VII. had been influenced, in endeavouring to uphold his authority, was ineffectual in securing the immediate succession to his own dynasty. At his death an Austrian and a Luxemburg party were again arrayed against each other, while the papal court, and more especially its protector, the King of France, gave free scope to their intrigues during this crisis of the affairs of Germany: and hence arose that fatal double election of Frederick the Handsome of Austria, and Louis of Bavaria. We know indeed by what sacrifices and struggles Louis won for himself the double kingly and imperial crown; how he contrived to keep down the pretensions of Austria and to check the advances of the Luxemburg and Bohemian party; how correctly he estimated the idea of the empire which he wished to restore to Italy; and how ably and adroitly he strengthened the position of his family in the south of

Germany, by the acquisition of the northern territory of the Marquis of Brandenburg, while at the same time he formed far-extending family alliances in the north-west of the Empire. But although in these respects he certainly showed himself to be an emperor who promised to rank as the equal of the bravest of the Hohenstauffens or Guelphs, the still absent pope, who was dependent upon others, had unfortunately felt irreconcileably aggrieved by his advance against Rome, while Austria and Luxemburg were united more closely than ever with France. Louis and his adherents therefore fell under the ban of the Church, and were thus induced to set up a rival pope, and driven into a schism, which could not fail to bring upon them the ill-will of Christendom; and from that hour the life of this otherwise brave and good prince was troubled by many cares and sorrows. His friendships and alliances fell away from him on every side, and when they failed he was necessarily driven to seek support elsewhere, and by fomenting jealousies and dissensions among his enemies, to prevent the consolidation of any system of firm policy on their part. Under such circumstances the emperor could hardly fail to have recourse to desperate measures, in which he was indeed met half-way by the spirit of the times in which he lived. The principle of the unconditional infallibility of the Popes had suffered a bitter humiliation, for it was in their own Italian home that the boldest voices were raised in favour of one sole temporal ruler. Dante in his theory of state policy had pointed to one universal emperor; Marsilius of Padua had stood forth as the most distinguished writer in support of these views against spiritual supremacy, and among the Mendicant Orders, but more especially

the Franciscans, doctrines were taught, and practices followed, which were in direct and dangerous opposition to the authority of the pontifical college, which was moreover shaken on every side. But while we are bound to admit that the policy and mode of action pursued by Louis in these respects seem to have been due merely to the promptings of temerity and even desperation, we cannot on the other hand fail to allow that they indicate a revival of a deep inner stirring of the mind, which touched the heart of the German nation, like the first breath of a renovating spring. This is undoubtedly the source from whence sprang those truly popular sympathies with the Bavarian Emperor, which differed so widely from any feeling that was elicited among the people, either before or after that time, for the members of the houses of Hapsburg and Luxemburg.

It was fortunate, however, for Louis, that he was not wholly without adherents in other countries. The German element that still lingered in the minds of the English was equally at variance with the avarice and ambition of the papal conclave, and it is a matter of no slight significance that one of the Emperor's most distinguished representatives in his conflict with Pope John XXII., was an English Franciscan, the celebrated schoolman William Occam. Another source of strength was the recent family alliance that had again been formed between the two reigning houses by the Emperor's marriage with Margareta, the eldest daughter of Count William of Hainault, who by the extinction of the older family had recently also become Count of Holland; and as there seemed to be some danger of a failure of male heirs in that line, a glorious prospect was opening to the

imperial dynasty of the Wittelsbach family of recovering ancient territories of the Empire, in which German sympathies were beginning to lose their hold on the minds of the people. Edward III. on the other hand, while still a minor, had married Philippa, the younger sister of Margareta, but this marriage had been amply blessed in a social point of view by a numerous progeny, and politically by the great influence which it exercised on the current events of the times. The dynastic interests of the families of Wittelsbach and Plantagenet were thus necessarily brought in contact in the Low Countries, where there were not wanting both spiritual and material elements to cement their union. Two influential rulers of neighbouring territories had been included in this family compact, for Reinald of Guelders had married a sister of the King of England, while William of Juliers was regarded as a most enthusiastic adherent of the Anglo-German Alliance. Brabant and a portion at least of Flanders were still fiefs of the Empire, but here the rich free-cities, which were entirely governed by German autonomies, predominated, constituting at that time the most important money-marts of the north-west of Europe, and the great emporiums of English and German trade. It may readily be conceived that the report of this compact was received with the greatest satisfaction in these towns, more especially since the Count of Flanders had been obliged about this time to flee before the opposition of the popular communes of his country, and to seek refuge and protection at the court of his feudal suzerain at Paris. Great too was the welcome awarded to the dissemination of liberal spiritual views and opinions, which did not always accord with the

hitherto immutable doctrines of the Church of Rome, but which, like the rich products of agriculture and manufactures, were rapidly exchanged among these industrious communities of German traders. The tendency against France, where the pope and the systematic doctrines of Rome sought not only a safe place of refuge, but additional support for future acts of aggression, was at that period most strongly manifested within the English dominions.

This country, which had once been characterised by its powerful feudal tendencies, had entered upon a course which was destined to lead it towards the attainment of a constitutional government—a result which was favoured by the gradual disruption of its feudal connexion with France—and in proportion as the Saxon element gained ascendency in the English nation, an antipathy against France rapidly increased, although only a short time before French sentiments had maintained a spiritual and, to a certain extent, also a political supremacy in the country. During the weak reign of Edward II. these tendencies had been powerfully developed in two different directions, while at the same time the sufferings that had arisen from the national disgrace under that feeble monarch accumulated a mass of evils, which his successor felt himself called upon to retrieve. The necessity of this was recognised by Edward III. when that young, active, and ambitious prince assumed the reins of government. He did not pause when he found himself compelled to oppose his own scheming mother, and to award to her the punishment she merited for the part she had played in the humiliation of England; nor had he any scruple in appealing to the popular instincts of

his subjects for support, and in relinquishing some of the prerogatives of his crown, for the sake of obtaining the high aim towards which he aspired. When the direct succession of the Capetian line became extinct in France, and the first of the Valois ascended the throne, the king of England, without heeding the Salic laws of hereditary descent, advanced the claims of his mother and stepped forth as a candidate for the French crown. Instead of remaining merely a vassal as his ancestors had been since the conquest by right of their possessions in Normandy, Poitou and Guienne, he boldly and daringly aspired to the dignity of King of France. In this respect his wishes concurred with those of his people, who were beginning to assert a more manly independence of tone, and here, too, his views and schemes brought him into closer affinity of feeling with his imperial brother-in-law. We now see this young monarch, after he had regulated and improved the relations between England and Scotland, which had suffered materially during the previous reign, and after he had come to an understanding with his parliament, turn with an almost passionate eagerness to the subject of the maritime trade of his country, in the consideration of which he gave evidence of a sagacity in the pursuit of his object, worthy of a far-sighted politician and legislator. In order to secure the means necessary for the vast and extensive operations which he had in view, he adopted measures, which are characterised by a daring and masterly policy, the politico-economical principles of which were, at all events, thoroughly consistent with the circumstances of the times. Notwithstanding all the opposition and disaffection to which

the measure threatened to give rise, Edward doubled and tripled the amount of the subsidies, which he exacted from that staple article of national wealth—wool—and he at the same time observed a most stringent and arbitrary protective system, according to which it was required that all supplies of wool should be placed in certain ports, as if they were his own property; while the exportation of this article was forbidden, except in certain large quantities, and its transport exclusively limited to the ports of Antwerp and other Flemish cities. By these stringent measures he not only closely bound to his policy the flourishing municipalities of the German Hanseatic League, the ships of which were the principal agents in conveying the raw material and the manufactured goods either back to England or into the interior by way of Cologne, but he at the same time secured for himself and his people a system of prompt payment in hard cash, which no other state in Europe had been able to obtain.

After these preliminaries, diplomatic negotiations were opened at the different courts of the Netherlands in the spring of 1337. A brilliant English embassy, including Earls and Bishops, was despatched by a vessel, which at the same time carried a considerable cargo of wool, and thus associated together the plenipotentiary powers and the means of credit, which were then needed for cementing a politico-military compact. England required foreign troops for her schemes on the Continent in those days, as at every period of her European wars, and instead of voting subsidies and enlisting foreign legions as in modern times, it was the custom in the fourteenth century to secure whole squadrons of

armed men, and to pay their captains for the value of their services with the proceeds of the wool that was sold at Antwerp and Bruges. In every part of the continent, but more especially in the Low Countries, as in Hainault, Brabant, Guelders, Juliers, Berg, and many other small territories, such compacts were regularly and systematically effected. In the month of July, the English embassy signed a treaty at Frankfort, conjointly with the plenipotentiaries of the Emperor, by which the latter pledged himself to send ready armed into the field by the following month of November, 2,000 lances, in return for which his royal brother-in-law gave him credit for the sum of 300,000 gold florins on Dortrecht. And it was further arranged between the two, that they should have a personal conference on the Rhine, which was also to be attended by Louis' first-born son, the Margrave of Brandenburg, and the Margrave of Meissen, as well as by many other supporters of the Bavarian policy in Germany. Negotiations were followed up with much zeal with the Duke of Nassau and many of the princes of southern Germany, as for instance, the Counts of Teck, and their neighbours, and even with the Austrians, and thus Edward was led to cherish the hope that he might on this occasion cement a better understanding between the houses of Hapsburg and Wittelsbach, and, perhaps, effect a coalition, the general principles of which might be thoroughly German in spirit. Never at any other time had the imperial dignity been supported from without by such powerful material aids.

All these preliminaries, however, occupie more time than was quite in accordance with the eager wishes of those concerned in them, and it was not until the 16th

of July of the following year, that the king, in company with his consort and a distinguished retinue, was able to set out for Antwerp. His personal presence at the conference might, according to his idea, be the means of binding together the severed threads of various negotiations, and thus enable him to begin the attack against France, aided by the whole strength of the Anglo-German alliance. How animated was the scene in the ancient Abbey of St. Michael, where this brilliant prince and his numerous court took up their quarters for a whole year! The Duke of Brabant, the king's brother-in-law. the Count of Guelders, a number of noble knights from the Rhine-land, all eager for war, came and went, while high officials from England and emissaries fresh from the Empire deliberated together. There was one man, too, of public note, who had free access to the royal quarters, and whose name was then on the lips of all; a simple though a powerful man, who was a more important ally to the king of England than all these princes and nobles. This influential man was Jacob van Artevelde, commonly called the Brewer of Ghent. The important part which he played for a few years at the head of the democracy of Flanders, tends to make us forget the fact that by origin and tastes he belonged more to the aristocracy than the plebeian party, while his greatness was shared in by the nation at large. He had received the cultivation that appertained to his rank as a member of the ancient nobility, and like other men of noble birth had even made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, while he had always acted in regard to public affairs as became his station and the age in which he lived. At that period,

however, the civic Communes in Flanders had, as it were, assumed the place of the State, while the political dissensions had been merged in the popular factions, and found a powerful channel of expression in the influential guilds. It had long been the practice for patricians and nobles to allow their names to be enrolled in these trade-unions; and it thus happened that van Artevelde, the Brewer, had monopolized the chief influence over the other guilds. When the Flemish had driven out the family of their Counts, who had shown themselves somewhat too friendly to France, the victorious faction in Ghent acquired supremacy in the country, while their leader was called upon by the whole of Flanders to be the new *Ruwaert*. How attentively did the looks of all the members of those busy, wealthy and agitated corporations hang upon every glance of Artevelde; how anxiously did they defer to his advice, and how proud were the people, when they saw him passing through their noisy streets, brilliant and powerful as a king, in the full pomp of his dignity, and at the head of his stalwart guard. An alliance with such a man, who could sway the wills of the entire nation, was by no means to be neglected by Edward, and we may rightly conjecture that each fully comprehended the policy of the other, and that Artevelde was more especially the true bond of union that held together the various links in the chain of the Anglo-Flemish commercial policy; we, at all events, possess sufficient proof of the intimate footing on which they stood to each other, and of the decidedly German point of view, from which the Ruwaert regarded the great aim to which they were tending. His noble

spirit had rightly appreciated and recognised the excessive weight of the bonds by which the Church and the State, society and general intercourse were alike fettered.

After much deliberation at Antwerp, the king prepared himself for his journey to Germany, in order at length to fulfil his long-standing promise of meeting his imperial brother-in-law.

They alone could hope to put into action their long and zealously planned schemes, and towards the end of August messengers at length announced that Louis, who already in the spring had gone from Bavaria to the Rhine, and had long resided at Frankfort, absorbed in the most serious matters of state, was about to start from thence to Coblentz. It was on Sunday, the 16th of August, 1338, that the English court, escorted by many noblemen, a numerous retinue of servants and a guard of some sixty men left Antwerp, to make an excursion of a few weeks along the Rhine, many valuable particulars of which have been preserved to us by means of the Diary of Expenses, which was kept on this occasion. The princess Joan, a child only five years of age, accompanied her royal father, together with the noble queen Philippa, who although then far advanced in pregnancy, went some portion of the way. This princess was to have married Frederick IV. the young Duke of Austria, whose mother—and here again we see the political tendency of the alliance—was one of the Bavarian family. The heavy baggage had already been sent beforehand to Antwerp, from whence it was again despatched by water to the Rhine. A number of vehicles had also been hired to convey the

travellers and the most indispensable articles of their luggage into the interior.

Their way lay eastward through Brabant, and on the the 19th, Edward passed the night at Herenthals. On the following morning the queen took leave of him to return to Antwerp, while the others proceeded through Bree and Sittard to Juliers, which they reached on Saturday the 22d. The king alighted here at the house of a certain Lady Juliana von Werth, who seems to have played the part of hostess in the most charming manner. Count William of Juliers, who two years before had been elevated to the rank of Margrave, now also came to greet his royal guest. On the Sunday the travellers must have risen with the sun, for they had to make the long journey to Cologne in one day. Here they rested the following day, spending their time in seeing and doing numerous things, and in visiting many of the wonders of this great and far-famed city.

The ancient commercial relations between England and Cologne, which were now at their very height, made it an event of great importance to the inhabitants to receive a visit from the king of this wealthy land. Their city annals probably still told them, that on a former occasion, a hundred and fifty years earlier, another English monarch, Richard Cœur de Lion, when released from the hard captivity of the Emperor, had found a joyful reception among them, and that high mass had been celebrated in their cathedral in commemoration of his release. A still earlier connexion with the British island was moreover recorded in the legends which clung to the many Christian relics worshipped in Cologne. Recently the schools of the

Dominicans had become celebrated far beyond the German boundaries, and English brethren of the Order frequently came there to study, while King Edward I. had even caused masses to be read for the repose of the souls of his nearest kinsfolk at some of the most celebrated consecrated spots of Cologne. The grandson of that monarch, a man gifted with quick perceptions and great political foresight, had now come to see some of the renowned marvels of the Continent, to shew himself to the people of the land, and to strengthen the many bonds of intercourse which united the old city of Cologne with his capital on the banks of the Thames. We find that he took up his residence in the house of a rich burgher, the Knight Heinrich Scherfgin, who together with his wife Blida, a member of the family of Spiegel, long regarded this visit as an occasion of great honour and festivity. The merriment and rejoicing knew no bounds, and the throng of the curious populace was so great in the street, that the city was obliged to appoint four armed servants to assist the porter of the house in keeping the gate closed. Noble lords and knights, and messengers from every part had free access to the house, and many were the presents they brought to the royal guest in token of welcome. The Archbishop Walram, who was a member of the house of Juliers, sent a charger of high price by the hands of his esquire Wilhelm von Strake, while the knightly host of the king begs permission to offer him some elaborately ornamented weapons, which were probably samples of Cologne workmanship. A fiddler, named Franz, was in the meanwhile engaged to play for the entertainment of the guest. Still more interesting, however, as regards the

history of social culture, was the generous and truly royal demeanour of Edward on this occasion. The many churches and ecclesiastical buildings, of whose magnificence and beauty he had often heard in his own country, received munificent memorials of the king's brief sojourn, and it is probable that he visited many of these spots, and heard mass in several different churches. His gifts of forty shillings to each of the monasteries of the Minorites, Dominicans, Augustines and Carmelites, to the brethren of the Holy Cross and others, sufficiently show what was expected in this way from a monarch in the fourteenth century. The different altars and pictures of the eleven thousand Virgins, who according to the legend had come to Germany from England, received as much as £11 5*s*. The richest gifts of all were, however, those expended upon the cathedral itself, the noble choir of which had only a few years before been completed in the form in which we now see it. England had already for several generations taken the liveliest interest in the further construction of this wonderful building; for when the old cathedral was destroyed by fire, the Archbishop, Conrad von Hochstaden, had himself crossed the sea about the middle of the previous century, in order to collect contributions at the court of Henry III., who was known as a patron of art, and also among the subjects of that king, (many of whom were acquiring great wealth from the proceeds of their trade with Cologne,) in order to be able speedily to erect a building that should be worthy of the city and of its increasing reputation. It would appear that the king had gone in person to the cathedral; for the Diary of Expenses

distinguishes between his various gifts, according to the definite purposes for which they were designed, and which certainly imply that they were due to direct observation on his part. He only gave twenty-two shillings and sixpence to the various chapels and altars which were at that time completed amid the generally unfinished state of the grandly designed edifice, while he bestowed as much as fifty-eight shillings and sixpence on the recently erected shrine of the Magi, who were in that age worshipped, far and wide, through every part of Western Christendom. There may probably have been a box for receiving the gifts of the pious near the entrance of the cathedral, or it is not improbable that a direct appeal was made to the wealthy prince, unless indeed his architectural taste, of which he subsequently gave frequent evidence both at Westminster and Windsor, prompted him, in his admiration of this incomparable sample of Gothic architecture, to contribute of his own free will towards the completion of this noble work. But whatever the inducement might have been, certain it is that we find an entry in his Diary of Expenses of a donation of £67 10*s.* towards the building of the cathedral, and if we reckon this sum according to the value of money at that time, which was fully fifteen times as much as in the present day, we shall find that his present amounted to about £1,000, or from 6,000 to 7,000 dollars. English money was thus cemented into the very foundation stones of the central nave, and into the buttresses of the south tower. At all events, if ever a tablet were to be inscribed with the names of the many high and noble patrons of that vast labyrinth of columns and Gothic arches, among the first

and most distinguished would stand that of Edward III. of England.

We must now, however, follow his passage up the Rhine, for his journey was attended by memorable results, both in reference to the age in which he lived and the country in which he sojourned. On the Tuesday we find the king with all his retinue at Bonn, where he alighted at the house of Johann von Rese, one of the canons of the cathedral of that city. But the archbishop Walram, who held his court at Bonn, had prepared a great feast in his palace for the royal guest, with whom he probably had many weighty matters to discuss. And here we find that two minstrels in the service of the prince-primate, named Conrad and Ancelin, entertained the company with their music during the banquet.

On the following day, the travellers have a pleasant and merry passage along the beautiful river, and arrive in due order at the place of meeting. Two worthy Rhine skippers, whose names have been preserved in these records as Dietrich of Andernach, and Hanekin of Breisich, have undertaken, for the payment of £20 sterling, to convey the whole court, with all their horses and baggage, as far as Coblentz; the labour being effected by the help of eighteen strong watermen and forty-four assistants. When all is prepared, the king enters the vessel with his little daughter, and attended by his gallant retinue, among whom are four noble knights belonging to Rhenish families of distinction, who have received orders from the Emperor to attend upon the English king. In addition to these, there is also his body guard, consisting of sixty-six men, belonging

to the class of English yeomanry who, armed with bows and arrows, and clad in their usual green forester garbs, merrily take their places in the boats. All seem to have found pleasure in looking at the beautiful district through which they passed, as the barges were drawn slowly up against the broad current that flows between the Drachenfels and Rolandseck. On the Wednesday evening they land at Sinzig, where the king is entertained by a knight, named Wolfram von Deest. The next station at which they stop is the island of Niederwerth, where the whole company rest till the following Friday. We do not know whether Edward came one day too soon for the appointed conference with the Emperor Louis, or whether—and this seems indeed more probable—some brilliant entertainment had been prepared for him on the way. At all events we find that a number of the neighbouring princes and nobles have assembled together at this spot, to await the arrival of their royal ally, and to testify their respect for him. Here again, we read of the presentation of valuable gifts, and we find that several of the princes have brought with them their minstrels, who belonged in that age to the retinue of a court, and were an evidence of the cultivation and taste of their masters. A band of ten of these musicians, belonging to different lords, and at the head of whom appeared the king-at-arms, Master Conrad, as well as the five minstrels of Archbishop Baldwin of Treves, led by Master Heinrich Valbeck, and Gottschalk the piper, receive each of them fifty shillings sterling, while Master Ithel, with ten minstrels, who had been sent by the Emperor, is rewarded with a gift of a hundred shillings. We are led to

the assumption that this numerous band of musicians performed not only instrumental music, but sang German songs, the remains of the chivalric Minne-singers which had probably not quite died out from the charming districts of the Rhine, and thus the love and taste for art which this foreign prince exhibited, both in music and poetry, were amply gratified. Amid all this merry-making, however, the business that was to be prosecuted in common was discussed in the genuine mediæval style. There is little doubt that the war with France, and the actual condition of the German empire were made the subjects of discussion. Among the many persons who came in contact with the king of England, we also meet with the herald-at-arms of the Grand Master of Prussia, who in many respects stood in the closest relations to England, and who no doubt had his own reasons for welcoming the English monarch on his arrival in Germany. The throng of people upon the island of Niederwerth must have been very considerable, for the accounts show us that a fine of forty-six shillings and eightpence was paid to the principal proprietor of the district, the knight Johann von Valendar, for damage done in his vineyard, while Reginald Sculf, the bailiff of the archbishop of Cologne, received forty shillings as an indemnity for the mischief perpetrated on the lands of the primate. The king's host, Conrad Winter, a Præmonstratian friar, and the capitular of the Abbey of Romersdorf, the chaplain and friend of the archbishop of Treves, was paid twenty marks, while the inmates of the nunnery received a present of forty-six shillings and eightpence. On the 29th, the king proceeded slowly to Andernach, where he took up his abode with the Fran-

ciscans, whose hospitality he repaid by a gift of forty shillings. It is probable that he spent the Sunday there, for he made the last part of his journey to Cologne on Monday, the 31st of August. Here there was no lack of solemn greeting and welcome, for even before his vessel reached the city, he was met by the state barges of the Emperor, and loudly welcomed with the sound of trumpets and bugles, by four of the imperial minstrels, whilst the imperial grand falconer, a native of Lombardy, whose name was Scolaus, according to our authority, presented king Edward, in the name of his master, with the emblematic offering of a living eagle. After this, we unfortunately learn nothing further regarding the landing of Edward, or of the personal greeting of the two brothers-in-law and friends. For a week the columns of the Diary contain no entry, but during this time, Edward and his enormous retinue were entertained at the residence of the Emperor, who must have defrayed their expenses in all respects.

This was, however, the very week in which the entire Diet had assembled at Coblentz, around the person of the Emperor, to discuss and deliberate on matters of great weight. The questions under discussion, as we learn from different chronicles and some trustworthy documents, referred more especially to two highly important events, viz:—the attitude that was to be assumed on the part of the Empire in case of a war with France; the constitutional organization of the imperial government in relation to the intolerable encroachments of the papal court; and the maintenance of the dignity and authority of the emperor and of the electoral princes. The latter point had been under discussion

at the Diet which had met six weeks before at Rense, and which had been attended by all the members, with the exception only of the king of Bohemia. The resolutions adopted in regard to all these questions were to be accompanied by all possible solemnity, and it appears tolerably well proved, that it was on Saturday, the 5th of September, that a special meeting was held in the public market of St. Florian, at Coblentz. The emperor Louis appeared in the full pomp of his dignity, wearing the double crown upon his head, and carrying the sceptre in his hand, and sitting on a throne which was raised twelve feet above the ground. One step below him, sat his brother-in-law, the king of England, who was also adorned with his crown, whilst at least four of the electoral princes and other imperial dignitaries stood round them, each clothed in his robes of ceremony, and carrying the insignia of his office. The Margrave of Meissen was on the emperor's right hand, and the Margrave William of Juliers, on the king's left. Otho von Cuyk,-a noble lord of the lower Rhine district, who appears to have been intimately associated with king Edward, held aloft, as the representative of the Duke of Brabant, an ancient sword of state high above the emperor's head. The heralds calculated that on this occasion there were some 17,000 knights and lords assembled, independently of their retinues and of the populace, who had flocked into the city from every part.

As soon as silence had been commanded, five important laws of the Empire were proclaimed aloud, in the name of the Emperor. The object of these enactments was to try once more to prop up the tottering fabric of the State; and among other points, it was decreed that

the prince, who was chosen by the electors to be King of the Romans, should assume the rights and appanages belonging to his high dignity, without waiting for the confirmation of his title by the Pope. Whenever any one of the imperial vassals rebelled against the Empire, his life and property were to be forfeited; and whenever the Emperor, or his representative, summoned the army to serve in a war of the Empire, every man who held a feudal fief under the Crown, was bound by reason of his oath of fealty, to afford his aid. No one who had challenged another could, on penalty of disregarding the imperial injunctions, lay hands on the person or property of his adversary before three days had elapsed. Disturbers of the public peace and highway robbers were to be proceeded against with the severest penalties in regard to property and life, from which the Emperor even could not grant exemption. This promulgation of laws was followed by another emission of the imperial power, which was more closely connected with the former acts than would at first sight appear. Thus, for instance, the Emperor Louis, associating his brother-in-law, the king of England, in measures which the Diet had already proceeded with on account of the impending campaign, nominated him to be his Vicar, or representative, for all the imperial district lying on the left bank of the Rhine.

It had long been the custom to appoint imperial princes, and even foreign nobles, to be vicars or viceroys over the districts, or boundaries, in which they themselves exercised special influence. But the appointment of Edward, whose insular kingdom was so remote to this dignity, can be explained less on the ground of his

close affinity with the Emperor, than on account of the great influence which English policy exercised in Germany, or at least, in the north-west of the Empire, and more especially perhaps in consequence of nearly one-half of the electoral princes, with the Emperor at their head, having concluded military treaties with the English, and having promised to serve in the war that was to be conducted by Edward. Under these circumstances, he certainly needed a position to which—at all events in certain territories—it was essential to attach some portion of imperial authority. His appointment and these laws of the Empire were, however, so far connected, that both measures were taken independently of the Pope, and that the war was to be carried on against that very power, from whom alone Benedict was certain of receiving efficient aid. These resolutions were passed with all the solemnity that could be imparted by imperial ceremonials, and the might of Germany appeared in the eyes of the world to be once more alike great and powerful. After the Emperor and the Diet had attended high mass together on the following Sunday in the cathedral of Coblentz, and after Archbishop Baldwin of Treves had concluded a treaty with King Edward, and had promised to supply a contingent of 500 men-at-arms, and when, as it is related, the Emperor had sworn to the king for life or death, that he would assist him for seven years against Philip of Valois, and when finally the time for the opening of the campaign had been determined, the Diet was dissolved.

On Monday, the 17th of September, the two brothers-in-law took leave of each other. The Emperor and Empress, to whose care Edward had committed his little

daughter, went slowly to Munich by way of Frankfort; while Edward, after he had liberally paid the servants of the Emperor and court, and had presented large gifts and paid high fees amongst other things for a copy of the notices of the alliance, and for the papers connected with the imperial vicarship, to the notaries, chancery clerks, and writers, took nearly the same way homewards by which he had come, deviating, however, from the route in some slight particulars, which deserve to be recorded. For the first night, he again took up his abode at Andernach, but on this occasion, in a private house; while he passed the next night at Bonn, where he had a vexatious matter to settle with the burgomaster and magistrates of the place. It would appear that a portion of his English servants and attendants had remained here during his sojourn at Coblentz, and that on the 31st of August, these men, who had possibly been excited by too free indulgence in wine, had quarrelled with the inhabitants of Bonn, who very probably were not over civil to strangers. Some considerable amount of damage was done on the occasion, which the king was obliged to make good by a payment to the civic authorities of £22 10*s.* sterling. On the 9th of September, the journey was continued as far as Düren, and from thence through Sittard, where Queen Philippa again met her husband, to Bree and Herenthals and then on to Antwerp, where the court arrived after an absence of exactly four weeks.

Edward might now indeed flatter himself that in return for all his great expenditure of time and money, he was provided with the means necessary to proceed at once with his great undertaking. The delusion of

supposing that he had made a lasting compact and alliance with the Empire began, however, only too quickly to make itself manifest. For when in the following October, he attempted to avail himself of his new dignity by summoning, in his capacity of Imperial Vicar, all the princes under his jurisdiction to a Diet at Herk, in Brabant, the hollowness of the ground on which he stood, in common with all the confederated allies, was made too clearly evident. It was not only those princes who were known to be decidedly in favour of the French, as the Bishop of Louvain, who refused to appear at this Diet, but others even who had hitherto been his friends, as the Duke of Brabant. The winter, during which no warlike operations could be conducted, passed without effecting anything essential in regard to the better amalgamation of the separate masses. We do, indeed, still notice a continuance of the former zealous intercourse between Antwerp and Munich, between which cities and the many small capital towns of Germany messengers continually came and went. It was not till the summer of 1339 that the English and German troops assembled in Brabant and Flanders. Many of the nobles who had accepted large sums of English money, amongst others the Margraves of Brandenburg and Meissen, arrived at the head of the promised horsemen; but the Emperor failed to appear, and others followed his example. Many were glad enough to put English angels in their purses, but it was found that the intrigues emanating from Avignon and Paris were powerful enough to neutralise the promises that had been made to Edward. We discover, nevertheless, by the course which the campaign took from its very com-

mencement, that it was to be a war of the Empire, and that Edward would be pledged to a special course of policy in his character of Imperial Vicar. The first act was to enter the diocese of Cambray, which was still reckoned as a part of the Empire, and to lay waste and seize upon everything that fell in the way. King Philip VI. had, however, in good time carefully selected and strongly guarded the few good positions in the north of his territories, where the rivers had not many available fords.. He avoided, with great circumspection, any serious encounter with the superior forces of the enemy, who found that wherever they went everything had been laid waste, and that there was seldom anything left to destroy. The autumn had already advanced, and the period for which the troops had been engaged was fast drawing to a close, while the love of fighting had also begun to decline among the German allies. The campaign came to an inglorious termination without having brought any favourable result to the Bavarian party in the Empire; while, besides spending a useless amount of money, the King of England had drawn upon himself the ridicule of his opponents and the earnest admonitions of the Pope, without having found any opportunity of distinguishing himself as a military leader, or of bringing the strength of his own nation into the conflict. Benedict XII. had, indeed, no great desire for a rupture with him, but still he had emphatically warned the King, that he could not, with proper respect to the papal chair, nor without drawing much vexation on himself, accept titles and dignities from a prince who was himself neither king, nor emperor, and who, moreover, lay under the severest form of

condemnation that the Church could inflict. Edward, in the meanwhile, having been sufficiently warned by his unsuccessful attempt at Herk and by the miserable termination of the campaign, actually relinquished the dignity of Imperial Vicar, and even acted as if such a title had never appertained to him, for the deed of nomination, which was signed by Louis during his stay at Coblentz, seems to have disappeared most completely, notwithstanding every attempt that has been made to recover it. It thus happened that scarcely a year after that brilliant meeting at the Diet, the combined influence of the Pope and the king of France had succeeded in breaking up the great and dangerous coalition, which seemed to have been all but completed.

We will now follow the threads of these events, as they diverge from one another, in the same manner as we traced their gradual conjunction. During the first winter, the communication with the court of Munich appeared to be as animated as ever, for messengers still came and went, bearing political dispatches relating to the war with France, or to projected matrimonial alliances with the House of Austria. John de Montgomery, the most distinguished of these emissaries, brought every month a large sum, amounting to about 20,000 or 30,000 gulden, intended for distribution among those immediately about the person of the Emperor, and Empress, and among the princes of southern Germany. We can follow his account of these expenditures at the court of Mayence, and at that of Count Henneberg. He has to go three times in succession to Austria. The chief officers at the imperial court, as the Chancellor, or Heinrich von Cipplingen, a commander of the

Teutonic Order, the Notary-public, Ulrich von Augsburg, Master Raimund of Valenciennes, the imperial physician and secretary, all receive large sums in hard cash through his hands. He brings the Emperor, as a present from England, a couple of knives, and a costly silk bag embroidered with pearls for the Empress; for their eldest son, the Margrave of Brandenburg, a girdle, inlaid with silver; and for the Count of Neiffen, whose influence was all-powerful at court, equally valuable gifts. These civilities were frequently responded to by attentions from the other party, for either the imperial herald-at-arms, or Austrian knights, pay their respects at St. Michael's in Antwerp, or the Emperor's musicians come to entertain the English at Christmas. Liberal allowances have also to be made for the youthful Joan and her household at Munich. We meet continually with entries of the linen, jewels, and pearls, which she either used herself, or liberally gave to others, and she seems to have been attended by no inconsiderable suite; for at the close of one year, we find in reference to the English expenses at Munich, the remarkable notice, that as the food and drink provided by the imperial court had not been sufficient for the household of the princess, £46 sterling had been expended on account of the king of England, to supply the deficiencies. About this time, Edward's patience seems, however, to have been thoroughly exhausted, for notwithstanding all attempts on his part, no approximation took place betwen the Houses of Bavaria and Austria, while the Emperor even began to retreat more and more decidedly from the undertaking upon which he had so zealously entered, having at last been driven to despair

of the possibility of inducing the Empire to enter into the combination with England, by which he had hoped to compel the Pope to submit, and to make the king of France yield to the demands of Edward. At this juncture, in December, 1339, the English king sent John de Montgomery to bring his little daughter away from Bavaria. Preparations on a large scale were again required to convey the travellers and their luggage on their journey, and wherever such a course was practicable the passage was made by water, both the travellers and their horses having gone by boat as far as possible up the Danube, and then down the Rhine. By the 15th of April, 1340, Joan had again rejoined her parents, after which the close relations that had hitherto existed with the imperial court came to an end. These relations were, however, rather suspended than destroyed; for although the many brilliant political expectations and all immediate prospects of any important family union were necessarily relinquished, there was no serious estrangement, or even any definite variance, between these two closely allied courts.

King Edward, indeed, could not fail to recognise the miserable necessities and the great difficulties in which the Emperor was placed, whose government was everywhere disturbed by the intrigues of the Luxemburg or Bohemian and the Austrian party, and by the animosities which the Pope was perpetually fomenting amongst the faithful. He did not, therefore, bear any excessive resentment towards Louis, when the latter began in his great need to turn to France, making concessions in regard to many of the points of variance between himself and King Philip, and seeking to establish a

better understanding between his own party and the apostolic chair. Louis had perhaps hoped by these means to escape more easily from some of the endless embarrassments by which he was overwhelmed, and to secure a few brighter days before the close of his life. He trusted that with the explanations which he was prepared to make, he might still maintain those bonds of alliance, by which he was united to England and the Netherlands, and he therefore recalled from Edward his nomination to the dignity of imperial vicar, on the 25th of April, 1341, pledging himself at the same time to lay the foundation of a peace between the Houses of Valois and Plantagenet, while he endeavoured to explain and justify his whole course of conduct in a letter which he addressed to Edward.

These great events assumed, however, an essentially different course from any that had been foreseen by those who had taken part in them. The king of England had from time to time given evidence of sufficient energy to show that he was not likely to retreat after a first failure, and that when the support of others gave way, he possessed self-confidence enough to trust to his own resources. On the 24th of June, 1340, his fleet gained the first memorable sea victory of which the maritime history of England can boast. On this occasion his ships, which were lying off Sluys, defeated the much more heavily manned squadrons of the French and Italians, who were trying to close the entrance into the Schelt from the English, in the hope of thus destroying their politico-mercantile alliance with the Netherlands. "All who speak the German tongue rejoice in these tidings of victory," says, in his quaint rhymes,

Jan, the clerk of Ghent, who was a zealous partisan of an alliance between the kindred nations of Saxon origin. By this victory, Edward secured to himself the material support of the influential German traders of the populous and industrious cities of Flanders, and the free use of the ready money of the Hanseatic towns, which were largely indebted to him for their wealth. This is clearly shown, by the turn which affairs now took. It had been the well devised plan of the king, to give permanency to the effect of his sea-fight, by making another incursion into France. The army which he led on to this attack, was again, for the most part, composed of foreigners and mercenaries; while some of the princes of the Empire raised troops to aid him, and the Flemish Communes, with their Ruwaert at their head, joined his ranks. The result, however, was as unfortunate as in the previous year, for the troops of the Flemish cities, and the proud bands of knights, covered themselves with dishonour, and an unsatisfactory armistice was finally agreed upon, which did not settle any of the points of dispute, while to a certain extent it justified the Emperor in retreating from the alliance, and only left Edward the prospect of being able on some more fortunate occasion to resume the contest with different forces. He had, however, deeply involved himself in debt, and was not a little embarrassed to provide funds for paying the high subsidies due to the German princes. The Diary of Expenses, to which we have so frequently referred, contains, in the concluding entries for the year 1341, a long list of the sums he had paid, from which we learn that the Emperor received £8,227 1*s.*; the Margrave of Juliers, £8,962 10*s.*; Count Reinald of

Guelders, who had lately been made Duke, £4,612 10*s.*; Dietrich von Falkenberg, £3,864 8*s.* 3*d.*; the Count of Hainault, £3,150; the Duke of Brabant, £600; the Archbishop of Treves, £506 5*s.*; and many others similar, although generally, smaller sums. They were all drawn upon the Hanseatic Exchange, but the king was by this means necessarily brought into a close and dependent connexion with the German merchants which must have occasioned him very great trouble during the next few years.

When he was still at Antwerp, where the English court resided for nearly two years before their final return to Westminster, Edward was obliged to pawn his most valuable crown jewels, and to leave them in pledge with the Germans. From the carefully preserved correspondence relating to this affair, we learn that the great state crown had to be given up to the Elector of Treves, and that the queen's crown, together with many of the most costly of the regalia, remained for a considerable time in the hands of several burghers of Cologne. The Diary of Expenses preserves, in its dry enumeration of figures, a detailed narrative of these proceedings, and it informs us that an English knight, named Bartholomew Burgersh, was entrusted by the king and the privy council with the management of this delicate business; detailing how, on his arrival at Cologne, he had the regalia valued by a goldsmith of the city, named Lauretto, and that two burghers, Johannes von Spiegel and Richard Grim, had negotiated the affair with the usurers of the city; and further, that considerable sums were at different times raised on this security. But the necessity of the case waxed great. The

time at which the jewels should be redeemed fell due in the year 1342; and the letters which passed in reference to this matter, between the Court of Exchequer in London and the Council at Cologne, show us that king Edward was thoroughly unable to redeem the property. At this juncture, the representatives of the German Hanseatic Confederation in the Steelyard in London, the names of whose prosperous and influential mercantile houses are still known to us, united with the Cologne merchants in taking upon themselves the debt and its securities, furnished the king with fresh supplies of money, and restored to him his crown jewels, in return for which, Edward gave them as a security, the wool that was lying in the store-houses of several of the principal ports, some of his tin mines in Cornwall and other profitable crown properties, to be held by them for a series of years. By these transactions, the German League in London reached the summit of its high privileges, although by the same means it drew upon itself the direct ill-will and hatred of the English, who were jealous of foreigners. The native merchants and maritime traders of England began now, however, to attain a certain degree of efficiency and consideration, which tended, at no very remote period, to make the position of the foreign mercantile bodies extremely precarious.

But in the meanwhile, these shrewd associates of the Steelyard, who in all their speculations exhibited no inconsiderable degree of German patriotism, relieved the great embarrassments of the king, who had shown himself the champion of German nationality and the resolute enemy of the pretensions of France. It was

only by their assistance that he was able to bear up against the serious calamity by which he was visited when in July, 1345, his gallant friend and ally, Jacob van Artevelde, was slain in a disturbance which he had endeavoured to quell between the guilds of the weavers and fullers of Ghent. Van Artevelde had returned only a few days before from the roadstead of Sluys, where he had held a secret conference with king Edward, who had thought it worth his while to cross the water expressly for the purpose of having an interview with the Flemish burgher. There could be no doubt that the motives which had led to this murder lay far beneath the surface, and that Flanders was at that time in danger of falling a prey to French machinations, unless stringent measures were at once taken to save her. It was at this conjuncture that the king, trusting entirely in his home resources and in the money advanced to him by his German allies, resolved to make his attack from a totally different quarter; and accordingly in the August of the following year, he effected a landing in Normandy, the temerity of which was crowned, after a difficult march across the north of France, by the brilliant victory of Crecy. The flower of French chivalry fell beneath the attacks of an irregularly formed and undisciplined army, which, however, was led by Edward in person, and by his still beardless heir, young Edward, the Black Prince. And although the king carried away little more than the empty title of the Valois, and the Fleur-de-Lis to quarter with his arms, the taking of Calais, which soon followed upon the former victory, testified that a new course of daring exploits was beginning on the part of the English,

to threaten the integrity of the dominions of the king of France, and that a point had been already gained which was not only of incomparable advantage, both with regard to measures of attack and defence, but at the same time afforded a direct means of communication between the English and their German allies, which was then specially important in regard to the commercial intercourse of the two nations. The news of the glorious victory of Crecy was received with acclamations throughout the whole of the Netherlands and the neighbouring German districts, while the Genoese and Florentines, who had fought on the side of the vanquished, were wont to repeat, in their Italian homes, tales of the terror and havoc that had been spread among them by the English arrows and battle-axes, and by the artillery, which, if we are to believe the annals of the times, was used for the first time at this battle. It is scarcely less worthy of notice, perhaps, that while the Lombard banks failed in London and Florence, the Steel-yard confederation, favoured by fortune, was reaping the rich fruits of its skilful speculations. Henceforth, however, the war in France was carried on solely by the English, for it is very rarely that we meet with the names of German knights in the ranks of Edward's army; and of all his old associates in war, the Count of Holstein seems to have been the only one who fought in his ranks, while on the opposite side, there were numerous princes and counts of Germany, who had probably been induced, either through proximity to France, or through their adhesion to the policy of the Luxemburg dynasty, to take up arms for king Philip.

A year after the great battle of Crecy, the emperor Louis was laid in the grave; his death having taken place on the 11th of October, 1347. Although his family maintained their supremacy for a few years in Brandenburg, and even during several generations in Holland, the prospect that had opened to them of inheriting the imperial crown, vanished with the death of Louis. When the Margrave of Brandenburg offered the insignia of the Empire to his uncle, King Edward III., and called upon him to come forward as a candidate for the dignity of King of the Romans, on the ground of his close affinity with the late Emperor and his earlier connexion with the Empire, the king hesitated not a moment in declining the proffered honour. His own crown seemed to him, if not so brilliant, at any rate a more secure and easy possession than the thorny diadem of Charlemagne. He had moreover been striving, step by step, for more than six years, to free himself from the embarrassments in which he had been entangled through his support of the imperial policy, and he was therefore but ill disposed to resume the trammels from which he had so lately freed himself, at the very moment when he had plucked the first rose amid those thorny paths, on which he too had been compelled to enter.

VI.

THE HANSEATIC STEELYARD IN LONDON.

THE German, who for the first time goes down the Thames from Westminster towards the busy parts of the city, cannot fail to be struck by the numerous bridges, the many spires and domes, which rise through the surrounding smoke and fog, and the interminable succession of busy warehouses which he passes before he reaches the last bridge, whose colossal arches span the river. At this point he is involuntarily reminded, by the sight of one of the quays which lies apart from the others, of the maritime towns of his own country; for here the vast and lofty warehouses are built in the peculiar style which characterises many similar erections in Germany, and adorned, not only with brightly painted green shutters, but with the unwonted accompaniment of a few green trees before them. This is, in fact, a spot in which, from the earliest ages, Germans have dwelt in the very midst of the city of London, and where they continued to hold property till within the last few years; for here stood the ancient factory and emporium of the merchants of the German Hanseatic League, which was known by the name of the Steelyard. It is not easy to explain with any certainty why the Germans long before, and in preference to almost all other Euro-

pean nations, were allowed for ages the high privilege of possessing land and houses in so exclusive a country as England, although we may perhaps conjecture that these special prerogatives were in part due to the similarity which exists between the geographical configuration of the north of Germany and of the southern parts of England, and in part to the indelible impressions produced by affinity of races. The Angles and the Saxons, who ventured across the boisterous North Sea to subjugate Britain, were also unquestionably the means of opening the first commercial intercourse between the two countries. These relations became much closer in after times, when the descendants of Alfred the Great allied themselves with the posterity of Otho of Germany, with whom they shared a common origin. The alliances between the princely houses of Northern Germany and the royal family of England have continued to the present day. The white horse which Hengist and Horsa bore as their cognizance is still to be seen in the arms of Brunswick, Luneburg, and the county of Kent, and is the sea-horse, in memory of which the Saxons poetically named their high-beaked ships. Close bonds of relationship between the princes of the two countries, and the common origin of both nations, have thus tended essentially to promote the special direction which their international relations have assumed.

It is not difficult to instance some of the principal epochs in the development of these relations from the history of the Steelyard. A corporation of German traders must have existed on the banks of the Thames long before the German cities had combined to form their renowned league, and therefore long before they had

laid the foundations of their distant factories in Russia, Scandinavia, Flanders, and Portugal, at Novgorod, Wisby, Bergen, Antwerp, and Lisbon. The laws of the Saxon king, Ethelred II., who reigned from 978 to 1016, secured to natives of the countries under the rule of the Emperor the same rights when they entered English ports with their ships as those which the natives of England possessed, in return for which they were bound to make a donation at Christmas and at Easter of two pieces of gray and one of brown cloth, ten pounds of pepper, five pair of men's gloves, and two barrels of vinegar. The fact that no money was required of them is entirely in accordance with the ancient usages of mercantile guilds or corporations, the members of which, it must, moreover, be presumed, remained in England throughout the winter. It is not till the second half of the twelfth century that we again hear of this guild, when Henry II., the first of the Plantagenets, took the people of Cologne, together with the house which they possessed in London and all the goods therein contained, under his special protection; while at the same time he allowed them to sell their Rhenish wine, which they had already begun to bring into the London market, for the same price at which French wines were then sold. When at a subsequent period Richard Cœur de Lion, after his release from the captivity in which the emperor, Henry VI., had kept him, was hastening homeward as joyous as a wild bird that has just escaped from its cage, he rested a day at Cologne, where he attended high mass in the cathedral, and testified his grateful acknowledgment of the ready welcome he had received from the burghers by exempt-

ing them from the annual rent of two English shillings, which they had hitherto been compelled to pay for their Guildhall in London. It was, therefore, the subjects of the Emperor, and more especially burghers of Cologne, to whom the house in London belonged which bore the old Saxon name of Guildhall, which still appertains to the civic hall of the City.

It was not long, however, before the natives of other German cities made themselves known in London, and became incorporated in a commercial league. This was the period, moreover, at which the Empire was disturbed by the fatal struggles of the Hohenstaufen and Guelphs, to the latter of which parties Henry II. of England had been more specially inclined since one of his daughters had married Henry the Lion. This policy, which on the one hand tended very materially to destroy German unity, was on the other hand the very means by which the cities of Italy, as well as those of Southern and Northern Germany, acquired by a remarkably rapid development the condition of almost independent communes. The election of the Emperor Otho IV., the first Guelph who superseded the Hohenstaufen family, was effected by the help of his uncle Richard Cœur de Lion and by the aid of English money. The burghers of Cologne continued faithful to him, even after the great victory of Bouvines, where Otho and John of England were defeated by the arms of France, and through the policy of the Hohenstaufen. When the great emperor, Frederick II., died after a long and chequered rule, and his family speedily shared one common tragical fate, Richard of Cornwall, a prince of the house of Plantagenet, and the brother of the English king, Henry III.,

presented himself as one of the candidates for the throne of the divided empire, and as the representative of the Guelphic policy. In his reign the cities of Northern Germany cemented their union, and it was to him that the Hanseatic League owed its recognition in England. King John had already expressly granted to the people of Bremen the same rights as those which had been awarded to the burghers of Cologne, and to these were added the traders of Hamburg, of Lubeck—a place which soon afterwards became the chief of the Hanseatic towns—and the merchants of Rostock, Wismar, Stralsund, and Greifswald. The burghers of Cologne were not a little jealous of this influx of their countrymen from Northern Germany; but in spite of their remonstrances, Henry III., in the year 1260, granted by letters patent the same rights to all the merchants of Germany who had a share in the house in London, which was known as the German Guildhall, or the *Aula Teutonicorum*.

A short family history, which belongs to this period, may perhaps serve to give us some idea of the immigration and mode of life practised by Germans of this class in England. The city archives of London contain a very remarkable vellum codex belonging to the second half of the thirteenth century, the author of which, speaking modestly of himself in the third person, gives a short account of his origin. In the latter part of the twelfth century, he says, a native of the city of Cologne, named Arnold of Grevinge, came to England with his wife, whose name was Ode. They were childless, and on their first landing they proceeded at once to make a pilgrimage to the grave of the venerated Archbishop

of Canterbury, St. Thomas Becket—who since his murder in 1170 had worked many miracles—with the view of praying to the martyr, that through his intercession they might be blessed with offspring. If a son were born to them, they intended that he should be dedicated to the service of God and enter the celebrated monastery at Canterbury, over which Thomas Becket had once presided. After this, Arnold went to London, where he followed his business. In the course of time two children were born to him, a son—whom he called Thomas, in gratitude to the saint for having heard his prayers—and a daughter named Juliana. Thomas did not indeed become a monk, but in lieu of this, he took the cross, and in the year 1203 followed Count Baldwin of Flanders to Constantinople, at the taking of which he disappeared, and was never heard of again. His sister Juliana married in London a countryman of her own, named Thedmar, who was a native of the town of Bremen. They became the parents of eleven children, and a proof of the prosperity with which they were blessed is afforded by the liberal provision which they made for their four daughters on their respective marriages. One of their sons, named Arnold, is the author of the old vellum folio, the chief part of whose contents was published some years ago. He was a man who played a distinguished part in the history of the city in that troubled age. He was one of the twenty-six civic aldermen; but he did not the less on that account retain a faithful and grateful remembrance of his origin, maintaining through life a friendly footing towards his countrymen, who also elected him to the office of alderman and president of their own Guildhall.

During the struggle of the barons with Henry III. in which the democratic party was decidedly in the ascendent in the city, he maintained a strictly conservative policy and adhered closely to the king, in consequence of which he was frequently obliged to pay heavy fines, and on one occasion his life even was in danger. He died, respected and esteemed, at the advanced age of ninety. In the book, which is undoubtedly written by himself, he relates many things of Richard, King of Rome, with whom he seems to have been personally acquainted, and it would appear that he obtained from him very considerable privileges for those of his countrymen who belonged to the German sea-ports, and he also speaks with special interest of the election of Count Rudolf of Hapsburg to the dignity of King of the Romans, by which the dismembered empire recovered some degree of respect in the estimation of other nations. These few traits from the life of an English alderman of Bremish descent, afford us an insight into the manner in which industrious and thrifty German emigrants and their descendants made themselves happy in their English homes, and give us, in relation at least to one family, an example which the whole German colony might have done well to follow; for it shows us how the jealousies existing between persons belonging to Cologne and the cities of the Hanseatic League were reconciled by a happy marriage.

Henceforth the merchants from the Rhineland and those from the Baltic and the North Sea lived together in harmony, and enjoyed in common the very considerable advantages which were connected with their Guildhall. In regard to thrifty activity, the English

could not be compared with them, and indeed, in point of wealth, no one could compete with these Germans, excepting, perhaps, the Italian money-changers of Lombard Street, which was then, as it still is, a favourite locality for banking-houses. The Germans, who were adverse to the business of usury, devoted themselves almost exclusively to mercantile affairs, and they imported in their ships both the raw produce of Norway and Russia, and the rich fruits of Spain and Portugal. Their trade received a very great impulse at the beginning of the brilliant reign of the powerful Edward III. The long-continued contest in which this prince was engaged in his endeavours to secure the crown of France required, moreover, the most extraordinary resources. The close relations of affinity by which he was connected with the German Emperor, Louis IV., and the reigning family of the Netherlands, soon turned his thoughts, in regard to political and commercial combinations, almost exclusively to the Empire. In the summer of 1338, Edward made an excursion on the Rhine, and after lingering for a time at Cologne, where he admired the recently-finished choir of that noble cathedral, and after making his rich offerings, proceeded to discuss matters of business with his brother-in-law, the Emperor, at Coblentz. After a few years, however, it happened that the war-taxes which he was compelled to raise in his own country far exceeded the resources at his command. The money-market in England, Flanders, and Italy, was moreover in a very depressed condition, and the celebrated commercial firm of the Bardi, at Florence, which constituted the very focus of the Italian usury business, had failed, and the King of England appeared in their books as a

debtor for the sum of 1,000,000 of golden guldens. The occasion was adroitly turned to account by the merchants of the Hanseatic League, who again hastened to the king's assistance in his hour of need. Wool and leather then constituted the most remunerative articles yielded by England, which was indeed singularly favoured in respect to the nature of its products; but, in accordance with the commercial policy of the king, which was based upon the strictest protective system, wool could only be exported to Flanders during the continuance of the war with France. Such being the case, no better agent could be found for its transport to the rich Flemish cities than the Hanseatic merchants, who again conveyed the woven stuffs and cloths through Cologne further into the interior of Germany, and, in return for such privileges as these, the members of the German Guildhall always showed themselves ready to advance new sums of money. The rich mercantile houses of Tidemann von Limberg, the Brothers Reule, Clippings, &c. had then as great a reputation in London, as the Rothschilds and Barings of the present day. By way of security, they had even obtained the management of the export duties in the different maritime ports, while Tidemann von Limberg held for several years the valuable tin mines in the county of Cornwall, which were included in the appanages of the Prince of Wales. Edward's crown and the jewels of the queen consort, with the insignia used at her coronation, were for a long time pledged in the city of Cologne, and we learn from a correspondence, still preserved among the Chancery Records in London, that the king was not able to redeem them when the time, for which they

were pledged, had expired. It was then that these members of the Steelyard again proffered him the loan of more money, and having redeemed the crown jewels they sent to Germany for them, and restored them to the king. He was now able to draw again upon these houses to the amount of £20,000 or £30,000 sterling—a sum of money the full value of which at that period was fifteen times greater than in the present day. The great victories, won by the Black Prince at Crecy and Poitiers, must therefore have been gained, in no small degree, by the help of German industry and German capital; nor did these merchants show any diffidence in accepting for their factory still more important privileges in return for these great services.

The beginning of the fifteenth century was the culminating point of the Hanseatic League and consequently also of the Steelyard in London. Soon, however, the rise of the Scandinavian powers, and the consolidation of the Duchy of Burgundy in the Netherlands became dangerous to the exclusive and strongly egotistical commercial system of the German traders in London. Their position in England, also, soon became less pleasant, for, notwithstanding the distress of the times during the disastrous Wars of the Roses, an efficient class of native traders had steadily been rising into notice, and attaining great wealth in imitation of their Italian and German prototypes; and we now for the first time begin to trace the dawn of that spirit of mercantile enterprise, which in the present day is the wonder and admiration of every zone of the globe. A numerous guild of merchants, trading in foreign parts, now sought to be admitted into the German cities of

the Baltic, in Prussia, and Livonia. The Hanseatic League refused, however, in accordance with their usual system of exclusive policy, to grant them the same privileges which they had themselves enjoyed for centuries in Russia, Scandinavia, and England. Some of these merchant-adventurers, as the members of this commercial company were called, were even in danger of losing both property and life, and hence arose lawsuits and reprisals, which often terminated in active hostilities. For several years a fierce maritime war raged between these rival traders, such as we can scarcely imagine, when we consider only the present relation between the Hanseatic and the British shipping. On one occasion a fleet of 108 sail, belonging to Lubeck and Riga, while returning from Spain, heavily laden with salt and the fruits of the south, was captured in the channel by the English. This act was revenged by the large coasting vessels of Lubeck and Danzic, which boldly cruised in the North Sea, and took possession of many splendid English prizes deeply laden with cloth and other valuable goods. This state of things necessarily did great damage to the trade of Northern Europe, but it was to no purpose that the Baltic merchants in their desire for peace negotiated, through their ambassadors, with the several governments. The Hanseatic League, and the Grand Master of Prussia, who had formed an alliance with them, obstinately insisted upon the maintenance of their ancient privileges, while the English, who could not obtain similar immunities to those which they had granted to others, required that the Germans should pay the tax on wine and wool which had been exacted from all other foreigners, dealing in the English markets.

The German traders resisted with might and main, but at length, in the year 1469, they were condemned by the courts to pay a fine of £13,520 sterling. Many members of the Steelyard were thrown into prison, and this ancient corporation ran great risk of losing its rights, together with the house and land it had so long possessed. At the same time dissension broke out in the very midst of the league, for the merchants of Cologne and of Western Germany were at variance with those of Lubeck and the Baltic cities. It is not improbable that the entire League would prematurely have come to an end had not the Parliament been the first to make overtures of peace. Even when armed ships from Bremen, Hamburg, and Danzic, sailing under the flag of Charles the Bold, of Burgundy, entered the channel and made a landing at several points of the English coast, the House of Commons did not remit its efforts to effect an amicable adjustment of the differences. To Edward IV., who after he had been once driven from his country by a Lancastrian faction, and had been enabled to return by the help of Hanseatic traders, belongs the merit of having brought about a peace in the year 1474, by the treaty of Utrecht, in which it was stipulated that satisfaction was to be made to all the parties concerned, while the corporation of the Steelyard was to recover its former rights and privileges, as far as the altered circumstances of the times would admit.

The German traders continued to enjoy their rights throughout nearly the whole of the century in which mankind was enriched by the acquisition of a great continent, and ennobled by the reformation of the Church. The discovery of America by Columbus, to which was soon

added that of hitherto unknown districts by the Spaniards and Portuguese in the south, and by the English and French in the north of the new world, rapidly dimmed the glory of Venice and Genoa, and threw into the shade the pretensions of the North German Hanseatic League. The bold schemes of Jürgen Wullenwever for making Lubeck the starting point of a series of operations, the object of which was to gain supremacy over the north of Europe, were connected for a time with the aspirations which even before the Reformation, had arisen in men's minds for the amelioration of the Church, and once more the idea of the universality of the power of the Hanseatic League was re-awakened, but only for a moment, before it was finally and rapidly laid at rest for ever. In the meanwhile totally different channels were opened to the commerce of the world, and the enterprise of the nations of Europe, for now hitherto unknown products were added to the necessaries of life; and in place of the miserable vessels with which trade had been carried on in the Mediterranean, the Baltic, and along the shores of the Atlantic, ships of totally different build and capacity were fast coming into use. The Hanseatic League had outlived its date, and the size of its ships had so much increased that they could no longer pass through the arches of the London Bridge, or lie at anchor, as in olden times, at the wharfs attached to the Steelyard Factory. The traders insisted not the less pertinaciously upon adhering to the letter of their old prerogatives, notwithstanding the wholly different circumstances of the times, while they refused to grant to the English those privileges in Germany, which

they had themselves so long enjoyed in a foreign country. When, therefore, on one occasion English subjects were expelled from Elbing and Stade by the command of the emperor, the English queen, Elizabeth, would no longer be trifled with: Her admirals, Drake and Norris, before whom the proud Spaniards had learnt to tremble on the coasts of the old and new world, captured in a short time more than sixty Hanseatic ships, while by a royal decree of January, 1598, she banished the German associates of the guild from the Steelyard. The buildings and wharfs were then employed for a time by the Admiralty, until the Hamburg and Lubeck authorities agreed to receive English merchant-adventurers on the same conditions that had been granted to the Hanseatic traders in London. From that time they recovered their old possessions and made the best use they could of them, till the great fire of London, in the year 1666, which laid the most considerable part of the city in ashes. But before we proceed to speak of the destruction of the Steelyard, we will attempt, as far as possible, to describe the buildings which composed it, and the life and habits of those who once occupied them.

The piece of land which was known as the Steelyard, although on what account cannot be determined with any certainty, occupied a most admirable position in the London of the middle ages. Situated only a little above London bridge, which, until a comparatively recent period, was the only bridge of the city, and not far from the Exchange, and St. Paul's, it extended, from its commodious wharfs on the river side, far inland, to the south of Thames-street, while on the west it was bounded by Dowgate-street, whose name reminds us of one of

the ancient river-gates of the city, and on the east by All-Saints-street. The original building was small enough, but in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries several manor-houses and other buildings in the neighbourhood were added to it. An edifice was then erected, whose solid style of architecture accorded with the requirements of a mediæval corporation, and which may be compared to the Arthushof at Danzic, the Rumeney at Soest, and similar ancient commercial halls. The northern front, which looked towards Thames-street, must have been especially imposing with its many storeys and its three circular gates, well protected and clamped with iron, each of which was embellished with a characteristic inscription. In one of these the house offers to all who enter it, "Joy, abundance of all good things, peace, rest, and honest pleasure," and in another we are told that "Gold is the father of the graceful arts, and the offspring of toil," whilst the third threatens all who infringe the rules of discipline with merited punishment. The double eagle of the Empire, with its outspread wings, surmounted the high gabled roof. Strong walls encompassed this enclosure, which stood like a little fortress in the midst of the city, and on many occasions afforded protection to its inmates. Sometimes it was the rude populace living on the banks of the river, who in their eagerness for strife, began the attack against these foreigners, whose language they could not understand, whose dress and appearance struck them as peculiar, and whose privileges excited their envy. And during the great communistic rising of the working classes and of the scum of the English population, under the ruthless demagogue, Wat Tyler, in the year

1381, when no one who rejoiced in the possession of rank or property was certain of his life, the Hanseatic merchants owed their safety to the strength of their walls, while other foreigners, and more especially the Flemish, were killed *en masse*.

The buildings which were surrounded in a fortress-like manner by these walls were of several different kinds. High above the rest, rose conspicuous the great hall, which served as a council-chamber at the general meetings, and was used for the celebration of the frequently recurring festivals, that had been kept from olden times by the traders. The high chimney-pieces and elaborately carved cornices were adorned with the state silver and tin vessels of the corporation, and there is little doubt that among these polished and glittering pieces of plate there may have been seen then, as we still find in Hanseatic Guildhalls, many curiosities and strange ornaments from foreign parts. There were two paintings, however, which must have been of special value, for they had been painted by the celebrated master, Hans Holbein, for his countrymen, who brought to their new homes the love of art, for which their native land was already distinguished. These two paintings were pendants, and represented under an allegorical garb the triumph of riches and the triumph of poverty. On the one side of the hall rose a tower, which was the sanctuary or treasury in which the company preserved their title deeds, and their most precious jewels and works of art; while on the other side was situated the capacious stone kitchen, in which ample preparations were made for the dinners of week-days and festivals. Between the hall and the wall upon the west side, lay a garden, in which the

Germans, in accordance with the practices and requirements of their own homes, had planted vines and fine fruit trees. On summer evenings they were wont to rest here after the business of the day, while the young people among them amused themselves with playing at ball, or with some similar recreation. The stores, sale-booths, and places of business belonging to the company extended in long rows down to the river side, and occupied by far the larger portion of the grounds. Here the individual mercantile firms of the German Hanseatic League had their counting houses, and here were stored away their goods according to a regularly prescribed allotment of space. Next to these were the broad wharfs surmounted by a lofty crane, to the foot of which the waters of the Thames reached at high tide, when the ships were able conveniently to unload their freights. This was truly one of the great staple places for the export and import of all the principal necessaries of life, before men had thought of the products of America.

From Norway, Russia, Poland and the territory of the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order in Prussia, iron, wood, hemp, tallow, wax, and furs were imported, while the Baltic itself yielded large quantities of its fish, more especially the herring, which had not then been found in any other waters, sturgeon, which was considered as a special dainty, and many cargoes of salted cod, with which the English were then accustomed to feed their troops when on service. There were also sometimes living creatures among these goods, as for instance, choice falcons from Norway or Livonia, for which the English nobility, who were passionately addicted to the sport, paid high prices. Ships that had come from the Rhine,

brought many bulky casks of noble wine, while the Flemish skippers conveyed large cargoes of cloth and linen of every quality. The intercourse with Spain and Portugal opened a connexion with all the nations of Southern Europe, who were engaged in the trade of the East, and was the means of introducing various luxuries, as figs, dates, almonds and cinnamon, dyes, choice spices and perfumes, medicines, metals, and even gold-dust and jewels. The Hanseatic traders did not, however, dispose of many of these things to their English customers, and they therefore carried them to Hamburg and Lubeck, from whence they were conveyed to Bergen and Riga. From the English they purchased the produce of their flocks and their tillage, as wool, strong hides, corn, beer and cheese. In fact, all articles of barter and commerce then known to the world exchanged hands, and were rapidly bought or sold at the Steelyard in London.

There was one house belonging to the Steelyard which must not remain unnoticed, and which was situated on the northern side, where it formed a portion of the front facing Thames-street, which was then as it still is one of the main streets of the city; we refer to the vaults which had existed here from the fifteenth century, and where strangers might purchase Rhenish wine, smoked ox-tongues, salmon, and caviar.

It was not only frequented by the prosperous traders of the Baltic and the North Sea, who resorted thither to close their bargains over their wine cups; for in the reign of James I., at a time when the fashionable world had not yet migrated to the west end of London, and when many noble families still lived in the city, this house enjoyed a reputation similar to that which

belonged to the neighbouring tavern, in which Shakespeare made the bulky Falstaff and the light hearted prince Henry quaff their cups of sack. It was not only the merchants who relished the good things of the Steelyard, for bishops and nobles, and even the lord chancellor himself, and many a distinguished privy councillor did not disdain to honour these vaults with their presence, or to taste the dainties of the foreigners. Frequent reference is made to this practice in the comedies written in the days of Queen Elizabeth and her successors, which constitute the best authorities for the social life of the times. "Let us go to the Stilliard and drink Rhenisch wine," says the author of Pierce Pennelisse, and in one of Webster's plays we have the following passage: "I come to invite you to meet him this afternoon at the Rhenish winehouse in the Stillyard. Will you steal forth, and taste of a Dutch bun and a keg of sturgeon?" Singularly enough a large tavern, bearing the sign of the Steelyard, still stands on the same spot, surmounted by a bunch of golden grapes, similar to those which we so frequently meet with in the narrow streets of old German towns. Here then, after the many vicissitudes which this spot has experienced, we find that the same name and business have been preserved since the day when, 600 years ago, Henry II. granted to the men of Cologne the right of selling their Rhenish wine within the walls of their own factory.

Although the tendencies of the German traders were, as we see, sufficiently material, they were not wholly deficient in a taste for other and better things. They had themselves proclaimed in their mottoes, that riches generate a taste for art, and gratification in its cultivation,

and they had given their poorer artistic brethren the opportunity of adorning their hall with beautiful paintings and carvings. But still higher and more earnest feelings kept alive in their hearts a religious veneration for the Christian faith, which had always been zealously upheld by the simple and honest burghers of the German imperial and Hanseatic cities. The adventurous and dangerous calling of the seaman, and the risk and uncertainty attending the speculations of the trader, fostered, more especially in the times preceding the Reformation, a humble and simple piety, which found its expression in a diligent attendance on the services of the Church and in the foundation of benevolent institutions of every kind. Strange to say, we scarcely meet with a trace of a separate chapel in the Steelyard in London, and it would appear that the company was incorporated in the neighbouring parish of All-Saints, the church of which, besides its other designation, appears early under the name of the Seamen's Church. Although the tradition that this church was founded by the Germans does not admit of confirmation, there can be no doubt that they were extensively connected with it. They probably maintained a special altar, made offerings of the long wax candles which were used at special festivals, and caused masses to be read on certain holy days. Even the Reformation did not entirely loosen this bond of connexion, which affords an obvious proof of the manner in which the Germans had identified themselves from a very early period with the English, among whom they lived. The Germans appear, however, to have adopted the new and purified doctrines, if not tardily, at any rate cautiously, for when, in the year

1526, a commission headed by the celebrated chancellor, Sir Thomas More, in person, himself a zealous catholic, proceeded in obedience to their orders to make a domiciliary search at the Steelyard for the writings of Luther, nothing was found among the corporation but Old and New Testaments, Gospels, and German Prayer-books, while the whole body, both young and old, were able with a clear conscience to swear at St. Paul's Cross, that there was not a heretic amongst them. Soon afterwards the Reformation was firmly established in England, as it had been in most of the cities belonging to the Hanseatic League, and from this time forth the Steelyard associates attended the English Protestant service in All Saints Church. Here they long occupied several rows of old seats, which were again appropriated to them on the restoration of the church after the great fire. Several artistically and brightly painted glass windows, in which the double-headed imperial eagle formed the centre-piece, were contributed by the corporation. After the great fire, they presented to the church the beautifully carved oak screen, which separates the choir from the main aisle, and which still excites the admiration of all who see it. It was the work of a Hamburg carver in wood, and represents numerous twisted columns, pilasters and arches. On the door leading to the altar, the imperial eagle is again introduced, while high above it, rise the royal arms of England. As late as the year 1747, these seats were still in the possession of the master of the Steelyard and the other representatives of the Guild, although the religious tendency of the Germans in London had already assumed a very different direction.

These, then, were the buildings of the corporation, and it now only remains for us to give such details of the life of the Hanseatic traders as are likely to prove interesting. This little state within a state naturally corresponded in its constitution to the forms of the times, and to the conditions of the government under which it existed. The actual members of the corporation and the masters had a perfect equality of votes in the assemblies, in which the interests of the collective body were discussed and decided upon. They annually selected from their own body an alderman, who with two assistants and a committee of nine members, managed the affairs of the corporation. In these elections, care was taken that all the representatives of the different Hanseatic cities should serve in turn on the committee. By this mode of government the affairs of this little world were settled in its own tongue, and measures taken for carrying on the administration of its affairs in a fitting and legal manner. The discipline of the place was almost monastic in its character; for it was required that all the masters living in the Steelyard, together with their apprentices, including even the bailiffs, should be unmarried men. Order and quiet were maintained by the most stringent regulations. Blows and other personal offences were punished by heavy money fines; while drunkenness, gambling and immoral conduct were visited by severe punishments. At nine o'clock in the evening the gates were closed, and not opened again to any one till the following morning. Every master was bound to maintain his helmet, coat of mail and all the arms belonging to a complete set of accoutrements, in good condition, within his own chamber. These regulations

aimed at enforcing a strict maintenance of the legal relations in which the traders stood to the country, in which they enjoyed the privileges of hospitality. Much stress was laid upon the necessity of never giving the first incentive to a quarrel. It was also the custom to choose as a mediator in all strifes or in civil law cases with the native English, either one of the aldermen of the city or the Lord Mayor himself. In criminal cases, the jury, as is still the custom in England under similar conditions, was composed of the one half of Englishmen, the other half of Germans.

The duties which the Guild owed to the authorities of the city and of the country at large, had been defined by ancient usage, and were scrupulously observed: thus, for instance, the regulations which enforced that their arms should always be ready, was not a mere useless precaution, for the Germans were bound to take part in the defence of the city; while, in accordance with a long-existing enactment, they were expected to supply the watch at the Bishop's-gate, which formed the northern entrance of the city, and when circumstances demanded it, to defend it and keep it in good condition. The old Bishop's-gate, as it has been described to us, was the work of German architects, while its statues, representing a bishop in the act of benediction, with King Alfred on his right hand and his son-in-law, Ethelred Earl of Mercia, on his left, carry us back to the old Saxon times. Even in the days of Protestantism, when the City of London was no longer troubled by enemies, the Hanseatic traders faithfully adhered to the fulfilment of this ancient duty.

In the course of time, the voluntary impositions, which

had been assumed by the Germans with a view of preserving their great privileges, which consisted chiefly in the smallness of the customs and duties demanded of them, acquired still greater importance. It thus happened that many presents were made, in money and articles of value. Thus, for instance, the Lord Mayor received from them every new year's day fifteen gold nobles, wrapped up in a pair of new gloves, which forcibly remind us of the singular offerings that were made in the Saxon times. When the Lord Mayor was especially popular with the Germans, he received in addition a keg of the best caviar, a few tons of herrings, or a hundredweight of Polish wax. The legal advisers whom the company selected from the serjeants-at-law, received similar gifts, in addition to their regular fees. From an account-book referring to the time of Queen Elizabeth, we see how much these presents to the authorities of the city, and even to the ministers of the crown, had become a matter of course. The officials of the Post Office, the Admiralty, the Treasury, and the Foreign Office, were all entered as having received their new year's gifts. The chief inspectors of customs received about 20*l.* sterling, intended probably to make them easy and indulgent in the exercise of their duties, which were frequently of a delicate nature. No inconsiderable sum is set down for small presents in the way of dainties and wine and for the gloves, in which, with a tender consideration for the feelings of the recipient, it was customary to wrap up the pieces of money.

By such means as these, a very friendly state of feeling was maintained. The "Easterlings," as the English had at all times been in the habit of calling the

German Hanseatic traders, were regarded by them on all public occasions as their fellow citizens, and accordingly the honest and respected members of the Steelyard failed not to take part in those great and sumptuous feasts, which the city of London has continued, even to the present day, to celebrate with the strangest pageantry. When the young king, Henry VI., returned in February, 1431, from Paris, where he had been crowned King of France, and the lord mayor, with the sheriff and aldermen on horseback, rode forth to meet him, dressed in scarlet and ermine, as the poet Lydgate describes in his song, the Easterlings came immediately behind the authorities of the city, mounted on gallant steeds, and headed by their wardens and masters.

On certain days in the year they celebrated festivals of their own. On the 4th of December, St. Barbara's day, after they had first attended service in All Saints' Church, they kept their solemn annual festival in the great hall. Doubly bright shone then the state salvers of the rich Guild, and bright were the walls with gay and costly carpets and hangings. The masters sat at a table raised above the rest, and their apprentices somewhat lower at long tables, and whatever rarities may have been served on these occasions, their favourite dish of cod never failed. The incumbent of All Saints' Church, and the porter of the royal court of the Star-Chamber, were annually invited before any other guests.

Enough, however, has been said of the life and habits of a corporation, which, as long as it was in harmony with the circumstances of the times, was fraught with blessings and advantages; and we have now only to relate the manner in which the ancient Steelyard came

to an end. We have already seen that the Hanseatic League and its factory had outlived its age in England as early as the sixteenth century. The fate of this institution was materially affected by the great fire of London, which took place in September, 1666, when the Steelyard, like the best part of the city, was laid in ashes. When the English government hesitated to renew the privileges of the Company, the members again obstinately insisted upon their good old rights, and after some litigation actually obtained a confirmation of their ancient charters from Charles II. The new building, which was then erected, was much more devoid of pretension than the old edifice with its solid walls, ponderous arches, and capacious halls, for only one dwelling house was erected for the Master of the Steelyard, while the rest of the space was appropriated to warehouses and wharfs, differing in very few respects from the numerous buildings of the same nature that are to be seen on either side of the Thames. The Guild in fact existed only in its past history, and it no longer needed its foreign counting-houses, for the position of continental merchants in England had been completely changed since the introduction of Cromwell's important measures of maritime policy. The associates of the Steelyard required, therefore, only a very small portion of their old premises in London, and they consequently let out the ground, in separate lots, to the London merchants for warehouses; and although the value of the land and the amount of the rent which it brought, more than supplied the expenses incurred by keeping up the establishment, the property sometimes became burdensome

to the free-cities of Lubeck, Hamburg, and Bremen, which were the heirs of the once powerful Hanseatic League. At length, after prolonged negotiations between the various governments of those cities, and after a careful investigation of the historical and legal organization of the Steelyard, the property was sold in the year 1853, to a company of English speculators, for the sum of £72,500.

There are some invaluable blessings which have been secured to the German population in London—which at present amounts to more than 50,000,—by the associates of the Steelyard, which it is to be hoped their countrymen may continue to enjoy for many ages. When, after the great fire, the Steelyard had been rebuilt, the Warden and Masters petitioned King Charles II. to grant one of the small city churches for their special use, and in consequence of this petition, a small church, known as Trinity Church, in the immediate neighbourhood of the Steelyard, was assigned to them by royal letters patent, in the year 1673. After the restoration of the building, which had suffered materially by the great fire, it was appropriated to the celebration of the protestant service in their own language, and with the exception of the German Court Chapel, Trinity Church is the mother of the other three or four protestant German chapels in London.

German merchants certainly no longer live within the Steelyard as in olden times, nor do they enjoy the exceptional privileges which were once possessed by their countrymen, but in exchange for the prerogatives of the Steelyard Corporation, they have attained a

footing of perfect equality with the natives of the land. The monopolies and restrictions of the middle ages have passed away, never to be revived, and in their place has arisen a system of free and untrammelled competition open alike to foreigners and native-born Englishmen.

VII.

TWÔ POETS, GOWER AND CHAUCER.

THE dawn of national poetry is generally contemporaneous with some brilliant epoch in the literary history and general development of a nation. When this awakening of a poetic spirit is coincident with an advanced period of the historical existence of a country, its language passes at the same time from an unsettled stage of immaturity to a consciousness of development, while it proclaims its own individuality with a characteristic and expressive force, which enables it to maintain its integrity, notwithstanding the modifications to which it naturally is subjected in the course of ages. This transition from the youth to the maturity of a language is always attended by special phenomena among nations of mixed origin, and more especially when it occurs at an historical age. Where two races blend together into one nationality, their respective languages also become gradually fused together into a new idiom. The origin and course of development of the English language present therefore both in respect to comparative philology and the history of literature an equally abundant mass of rich materials and equally numerous points of interest, whether we direct our investigations to its recent, or its remote history.

It would be difficult to estimate the relative proportions in which Celtic, Latin, Anglo-Saxon, Scandinavian, and Norman elements have combined to form the character and speech of Englishmen of the present day. We are only made conscious of one or other of these constituents as they in turn predominate, and it requires a more mature consideration to enable us to recognise the fact that there are some elements, whose presence we can scarcely trace, although their effects remain permanent. When the Angles and Saxons first subjugated the British race, after its previous contact with a Celto-Roman civilization, the victors, like all the other Germanic tribes, and like the ancient conquering nations of the East, kept themselves for a while widely separated from the vanquished. Neither party could, however, for any length of time escape from the effect of the opposing influences to which they were subjected, and even now the English language contains a number of words, some of which are of common every day use, which it does not possess in common with other Indo-European tongues, and which could only have been incorporated from the ancient British dialects.

The links, moreover, which once bound the island to the Roman empire of the west, and which were severed with its downfall, were again united through the Church of Rome. It is a question, however, whether in addition to the ecclesiastical type, which is easily recognised in the combination and style of the Anglo-Saxon diction, classical influences may not also have contributed their part. More marked and more unavoidable was the effect produced by contact with the

Danes—another kindred race—who first trod the shores of England in the character of pirates and subsequently remained as colonists in the land. We have most important evidence in proof of the permanency and deeper significance of the German element in the fact, that although a number of Scandinavian words, more especially in the north, on either side of the Tweed, have been fused into the national tongue, the special Scandinavian characteristics can nowhere be traced in the inflexions or arrangement of the words of the English language. Till the arrival of the Normans the Anglo-Saxon had scarcely been more changed by the intermixture of foreign elements than the continental German of the same period.

It was reserved for a people, who were themselves sprung from a mixture of Celts, Romans, Franks and Scandinavians, to debilitate among the Anglo-Saxons the Germanic element, which had hitherto been preserved in relative purity among them. It is true that the way must to some extent have been opened to the victorious chivalry of Normandy and to their race generally, for there are unmistakeable traces of the presence in the English language, prior to the year 1066, of many Norman-French words, which must have been introduced through the agency, not only of the Court and Church, but also, perhaps, by means of mercantile intercommunications. It is, however, still more evident that both nations remained, almost for centuries after the Conquest, perfectly distinct and unmixed. As the king bestowed the great fiefs of the crown exclusively upon his French nobles, and the Church filled almost all her sees with prelates of the same origin, the court and nobility

which governed the land constituted one distinct and exclusive nationality. And although there may have been no lack of Normans among the lower ranks of knighthood, or even among the burgesses, these classes were comprised for the most part of the entire mass of the vanquished, who, with a sense of the oppression which they were undeniably made to feel, stood widely apart from their rulers, both as to social intercourse and language. On this very account, however, the Norman-French could not have been used as the language of the State for at least the first century after the Conquest, although such was even then, and still is, sometimes assumed to have been the case. As the clergy constituted the interpreters between the two races and administered all the most important offices of the realm, the language of the State in England, as in every country of Western Christendom at that period, was necessarily Latin. Even after the Saxon element had begun to revive under the Plantagenets, and when the loss of Normandy had thrown the island back on its own resources, and the first fundamental principles of English law had been extorted from the Sovereign through Magna Charta, all public acts and enactments, and all public notices, whether judicial or administrative, were couched in Latin, although during the constitutional disturbances of Henry III.'s reign, it is worthy of notice that we meet with several instances in which the State documents are drawn up in both forms of the vernacular, in order to promote their easy and rapid comprehension. In the meanwhile, at the court of the monarch and in the castles of the nobles the use of French was pertinaciously adhered to, and it would

appear as if the language took the deepest root in the country at the very time when the foundations of the Anglo-Saxon independence were being laid. We have no satisfactory proof that any one of the first three Edwards spoke English, and it would appear that Edward III. on some public occasion found it difficult to put together three consecutive words in the national tongue. Indeed there are grounds to assume that French actually became the language of the State under Edward I. It was the language exclusively used in Parliament; for the notices of the proceedings of the meetings, the great majority of laws and statutes, and even petitions from the lower classes of the community were all drawn up in French. Although Latin always maintained its place, and notwithstanding the impetus which the use of the English tongue simultaneously received from all directions during the second half of the fourteenth century, the ancient Norman-French still continued to predominate for a certain time in different quarters, as in the House of Lords, and in some official departments of the City, until it slowly but steadily disappeared in the course of time, leaving only here and there a few memorials of its early use.

Such vicissitudes in the official use of these respective languages were, however, coincident with, and in a great measure dependent upon, important changes which took place in the two contending idioms, upon the amalgamation of certain literary expressions and upon the successive approximations and combinations which were established between the two. Like two rivers, both languages flow side by side for a time, until at length they blend together in one broad stream. Thus far each

maintains its own individuality, and endeavours to create new products from its own special sources. While some of the best Norman authors wrote and composed verses in honour of the Plantagenets and served at their courts, while we have many examples of chaste Norman lyric poetry which drew its source from English ground, and while the national songs composed in honour of Simon de Montfort, the hero of the popular party, were even composed in French, there existed a native literature which must be characterized as almost wholly German. The Anglo-Saxon chronicle does not break off till the end of King Stephen's reign, and at its close it still gives us only modified transitions from the vigorous old Germanic inflections, which are not more marked than the transition from the ancient High German into the Middle High German. The long heroic poems and rhyming chronicles of the thirteenth century, although more or less tinctured with provincial colouring and interwoven with foreign elements, still maintained essentially the same character. Then, moreover, we have evidence of the existence of a national lyrical poetry, whose tender and truly poetical sentiments may stand comparison with those of the German Minnesingers or the Provençal Troubadours, although in form and in the structure of the versification it fell short of its foreign rivals, owing to the antagonism between the old Germanic alliterations and the Romanic rhythm and its artificial combinations. It was in the political songs which, towards the end of the thirteenth century, reached the high degree of development which they subsequently maintained, as well as in the national ballads, that we first meet with a tone and form which may

be characterized as English, and which give us, as it were, the first fruits of this fusion.

This process, however, was not strictly in accordance with the natural order of things, and was rather due to artificial agencies and to the forcible pressure of circumstances. It is quite natural that the author of that remarkable poem, entitled *Pierce Plowman's Vision*, which depicts in few but bold touches the awakening of the fourth estate of the realm and the origin of the great rise of the peasantry of England, should, like the writers of the older national songs, employ a pure Saxon dialect in order to make himself comprehensible to men of low birth, while he pertinaciously adheres to the old rhythm, and jealously avoids everything savouring of a foreign style of diction. It is equally natural that Wiclif, who did not preach or translate the Bible exclusively for the middle and lower classes, should have written in a mixed dialect, which, like a *lingua franca*, formed to a certain extent the neutral ground of the two nationalities, and which, although we do not know how long it had been spoken, undoubtedly began at that period for the first time to be used as a written language. This great Reformer, who wrote in the cause of religion and the Church, could scarcely have employed any other dialect, considering the social and political importance which it had attained soon after the middle of the fourteenth century, which was the period at which he wrote. The House of Commons, whose national influence had been considerably augmented during the great French wars, continued from this time forth to conduct its proceedings in the dialect, which was familiar to all its members, whether Knights or

Burghers, and already in the year 1362 the nation had the satisfaction of seeing the two Houses opened with an English speech. At the same period, the Government enjoined upon the Courts of Law to have their proceedings conducted in English. And although Latin and French undoubtedly still lingered in the public enactments of the various departments of Government, a national language had now been finally obtained which even the high Norman nobility were compelled, at any rate partially, to adopt before the close of the century; for we find that the charges of high treason, which were brought against several peers, were drawn up in English, while soon after the convulsive change in the monarchy, the Sovereign was even obliged to employ the same form of speech. If this were the case among the highest ranks of official society, who were almost exclusively of Norman birth and descent, this dialect must have taken much deeper root in the lower classes, especially amongst the young. We are assured by a schoolmaster of that age, that he had entirely ceased to employ French in the course of his instructions as early as the year 1385, for he found that their mother tongue was a far better medium for teaching his boys the Latin grammar, as they scarcely understood a single word of French.

Thus, then, a national language had been developed, fully adequate to meet all the purposes and requirements of general intercourse. It was destined, moreover, simultaneously to attain a higher dignity and to receive an impress of durability, by being at once hallowed and enriched by the gift of poetry, bequeathed to it for the first time by two native poets. The services which

Gower and Chaucer have rendered to the language and poetry of England are indeed very unequal, since it is scarcely possible to name two minds more diametrically opposed to each other, in regard to their natural endowments and their powers of moulding their materials; but the labours of these two cotemporaries and friends tend towards one and the same aim, and the difference in their modes of life, their views and relative powers of imagination, prompts us to place them side by side, in order that by a comparison of the two, we may the better arrive at a knowledge of the results which have been obtained through their powerful aid. A sketch of the life and works of either of these poets can scarcely, moreover, be drawn up, independently of that of the other, as many threads of their history necessarily became intertwined at more than one point of their several careers.

From the few scanty biographical fragments which we have obtained regarding them, it would appear that there was at any rate considerable similarity in their origin, for it is highly probable that the ancestors of both were among the ranks of the Norman conquerors. John Gower, the date of whose birth has not indeed been ascertained with perfect certainty, but who was probably born between the years 1320 and 1330, was thus very nearly of the same age as his friend and comrade. Belonging to an affluent county family of good descent, Gower owned property of various kinds, which was situated to the south of London, and not far distant from it, but probably in the same district in which his ancestors for several generations before him had lived. He was at any rate descended in the second

line from a knight, whose estate was situated in Suffolk, and who was buried in a village church in Kent. He designates himself as an Esquire of Kent, and although he held several manors, either as his own, or from some feudal lord, in at least three counties, he never sought to obtain the honour of knighthood. The management of his property absorbed a large proportion of his time and attention, as we gather from the care with which he secured himself from the risk of legal informalities, by causing every change, effected through the granting or falling in of leases and mortgages, to be registered in the rolls of the Court of Chancery. It is probable that he was deterred both by circumstances and inclination from adopting the military profession, and we even find that he at all times held himself aloof from participation in local county affairs or in those political questions which the English gentlemen of that day had already begun to consider as a matter of duty. In this respect he forms a very striking exception to the rest of his countrymen at that period, for the brilliant wars of Edward III. and the Black Prince had given additional impulse to the romantic spirit of chivalry which characterized the adventure-loving class to which he belonged, while on the other hand a noble field of political activity had been opened to the gentry of the land, by the growing importance of the House of Commons. He was possessed of the culture which had long placed the knightly classes on an equality with the clergy, and it is highly probable that he had acquired his mental training either at Oxford or Cambridge, for the very varied reading on which his works are based could scarcely at that period have been acquired at any other

place in England, than at one of the sister Universities. We have, however, no certain evidence on the subject, and still less in reference to the question, whether he was a member of any of the Inns of Court, or whether he even belonged to the legal profession. He appears to have lived a retired, independent life, and to have mixed as little as possible with the outer world, and hence we meet in his works with strikingly few references to the current affairs of the times. There was one great event, however—the rising of the peasantry and the villeins, in the year 1381—that made a very powerful impression upon him, which is to be traced in all his subsequent writings. It is true that the movement began in Kent, where he had shortly before entered into possession of his principal patrimony, and of which he was probably a native. Although, like all the far-sighted men of his age, he could not fail to see the deep corruption of the church, he nevertheless shrank with abhorrence from a religious fanaticism, which aimed at the annihilation of all social bonds, and from which he very probably had himself suffered, both in money and estate. We find that he became from this time forth a thorough conservative, and a close adherent and upholder of the ancient authority of the church and state, entering even into alliance with those who had raised the standard of the church for the realization of the most ambitious objects, in the pursuit of which they hesitated not to plunge the country into the horrors of a revolution. Gower was probably correct in asserting that the vacillating rule of Richard II. had given the most powerful impetus to the opinions of Wiclif, and to the emancipation of the lower classes,

and hence he turned away from that monarch, although he was personally indebted to him for friendship and encouragement, and took part with his political opponents; in the first place, being on friendly terms probably with Thomas Duke of Gloucester, and soon afterwards giving his most unqualified confidence to the Lancastrian Henry of Derby, the future Henry IV. As early as the year 1393–4, the latter, while still bearing only the title of Earl, gave him an order, probably that of the Silver Swan, the cognizance of the Lancastrian family, for we find both the chain and the badge sculptured on the poet's monument.

Of the rest of his life we know in truth very little. It was not till his old age, when his hair was grey, that, wearying of his solitary state, he took a wife in the person of one Agnes Groundolf, to whom he was married on the 25th of January, 1397. His very comprehensive will does not mention any children, but it makes ample provision for the faithful nurse and companion of his latter years. After prolonged debility and sickness he lost his eyesight in the year 1401, and was then compelled to lay aside his pen for ever, and died in the autumn of 1408, when upwards of eighty years of age. He lies buried in the beautiful church of St. Mary Overies, now St. Saviour's, near the southern side of London Bridge; and we find from his last will, that he had been connected in several ways with London through his estates, which were all situated in the neighbourhood of the city. St. John's Chapel, in the church already referred to, still contains the monument that he had himself designed, and which, notwithstanding the many subse-

quent renovations which it has undergone, is tolerably well preserved. He lies clothed in the long closely buttoned habit of his day, with his order on his breast, and his coat of arms by his side; but whether the face, with its long locks and the wreath around the head, is intended as a portrait, it is difficult to say. Greater significance attaches, as we shall see, to the three volumes on which his head is resting, and which may be said to symbolize his life.

Very different and more varied are the few fragments which have come down to us regarding the life of his brother poet. Geoffrey Chaucer was born in the year 1328, and belonged to a knightly family which was probably settled in Kent, but which, at all events, appears to have maintained a constant and active communication with London. Their names and arms point to a noble Norman origin, but we nowhere find any record of the locality or value of their patrimonial estate. It is quite certain that the poet never enjoyed such worldly prosperity as Gower—a circumstance to which, independently of his more extensive mental gifts, we probably owe much of the rich produce of his mind. In point of mental culture he was fully equal to Gower, and on that account, there can be little doubt that he belonged to one of the Universities, but it is difficult to say to which, since he has left precious memorials of his intimacy with the modes of life and thought that prevailed in either, and hence Oxford and Cambridge still both compete for the honour of numbering him among their alumni. Not less indefinite is the traditionary account that he was at one time a member of the Temple. The first trustworthy informa-

tion that we obtain in reference to his life, is from his own assertion that he had served in the army which Edward III. in the autumn of 1359 led in person with no great success against the French. On that occasion Chaucer had the bad fortune to be made a prisoner of war; he was, however, released in the May of the following year, by the peace of Bretigny. Seven years later, we find him at court in personal attendance on Edward III. and married to Philippa Roet, an attendant and countrywoman of Edward's noble-hearted Queen, Philippa of Hainault. To this marriage the poet undoubtedly owed his fortune, as it was the means of securing him an annual pension, in addition to several other advantages. His wife was the elder sister of the celebrated Catherine Swynford, who after she had assisted in the education of the children born to John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster and titular king of Castile, by his first wife, lived with him first as his mistress, and afterwards became his third wife and the ancestress of the royal house of Tudor. Chaucer was thus brought into intimate relations with this energetic prince, who remained his patron and friend to the end of his life. One of the poet's earliest attempts at versification was composed in honour of the Duke's marriage with Blanche of Lancaster, whilst the death of this princess in the year 1369 was mourned by him in stanzas which are not deficient in elegance. After Chaucer had been once employed in the summer of 1370 on a short diplomatic mission on the continent, he was again despatched at the close of 1372, as one of the members of an embassy, accredited to the Doge of Genoa, for the purpose of establishing closer mercantile relations with the

republic. On this occasion, when he made a tour through the charming districts of northern Italy, and visited Florence, it has been conjectured from a remarkable passage in his great poem, that he very probably made the personal acquaintance of Petrarch at Padua. At all events this visit to Italy added greatly to his intimate acquaintance with the immortal works of the great founder of Italian poetry. On his return home, the aged king gave him the place of comptroller of the customs of wine and wool in the port of London, and in addition to a fixed salary, granted him a daily allowance of a pitcher of wine. In 1376 he was again employed in a secret mission to Flanders, and in the first year of Richard II.'s reign he was despatched as a joint envoy to the courts of France and Lombardy. After this he continued for several years quietly to exercise the duties of his office, until the first of October, 1396, when he was elected as knight of the shire for Kent, where he therefore probably owned some freehold property. He entered keenly into the party turmoils of that disturbed period, which appear to have been very unfavourable to his worldly prospects. During the session of parliament in which he served, the government which had hitherto been supported by the influence of his patron, John Duke of Gaunt, was overturned, and as early as in the following December, Chaucer was made to feel the unhappy effects of the change by losing his office and being deprived, in May, 1388, of his old court pension. There can be little doubt that a man so partial to the pleasures of life as Chaucer, must have suffered keenly from the embarrassed circumstances due to loss of money; but in the year 1389, the fall of the administration of the Duke

of Gloucester, who appears to have regarded him with no favourable eyes, on account of his adhesion to the Lancastrian faction, effected some improvement in his circumstances. He was now again restored to favour and was appointed clerk of the king's works at Westminster, Windsor, and the Tower, where King Richard was then having great alterations effected. But two years afterwards he also lost this post, and although we do not know to what his dismissal was due, we may perhaps conjecture that his opinions may have given umbrage to the king, whose vacillating character was always subjected to the ever varying influences that surrounded him. Care and want seemed to have pressed more and more heavily upon the poet with increasing years, and after the receipt of each half-yearly payment, he speedily fell back into his former poor and needy condition. Pressed by urgent creditors, we find him repeatedly applying in person at the treasury, to forestall the receipts of the scanty pension which Edward III. had granted him. But although his income had been slightly augmented by the annual gift of ten pounds from his old patron, John of Gaunt, his means were inadequate to cover his debts. What a contrast does this picture present to the opulent Gower, who never knew the cares and anxieties of straitened circumstances. We are forcibly reminded in Chaucer, of the great Castilian, Cervantes, who exhibited in many respects the same mental endowments, and who like him knew how to cheer and ennoble the chequered fortunes of the soldier, and to lighten the trials of poverty with the inexhaustible humour of a true poetic genius. Happily he was not suffered long to pine in want, for his fortunes once more revived when Henry IV., the son of his

patron, made himself master of the English throne: for one of the first acts of the new sovereign was to double the pension of this old and faithful servant of his house. Chaucer's descendants long afterwards gratefully and devotedly linked their own fate with that of the Lancastrian dynasty. The old poet himself did not long enjoy this favourable change in his fortune, for although we find that he took a lease in 1399 of a house at Westminster, the close of the following year, 1400, saw his remains laid in their last resting-place in Poet's Corner, where half a century later a sincere admirer of Chaucer raised to his memory the monument which is still standing in the venerable old Abbey. Although the inscription and the figure which once adorned the monument have long since disappeared, we have a more trustworthy portrait of him than of Gower, for his friend and imitator Occleve drew a likeness of him from memory in an autograph volume of his own, and of this drawing there exist numerous copies, both in pen and ink, and painted on wood. The hair is grey, the beard thin and parted in the middle, the figure portly and clad in the ample dress of the day. The face has an expression of thoughtfulness and refinement, whilst the attitude exhibits some trace of that elegance of which the poet confesses, in a playful allusion in his Canterbury Tales, that he was not altogether destitute, notwithstanding his robust and portly person. The eyes are cast down with an expression of thoughtful contemplation, while the rosary which he holds in his hand, and the ink or knife-horn which hangs suspended from a ribbon round his neck, have become almost typical in all delineations of Chaucer.

After following these sketches we shall find less difficulty in tracing the internal mental development of these cotemporary poets. Gower's thoughts appear as if chained to the soil which he called his own in right of feudal or hereditary tenure. In his earlier days he attempted, and not without some success, to compose in French verse, and the fifty ballads which have come down to us as his compositions have a smooth and easy flow, and might bear favourable comparison with other productions composed in accordance with long established rules, being in point of style and sequence of ideas perfectly in harmony with the art of versification then in the ascendant on the continent. The poet does indeed modestly beg for the indulgence of his readers, on the ground that he, as a native-born Englishman, could not be expected to write with fluency in a foreign tongue; but French can scarcely have been very strange to him, for considering his birth and descent it must have seemed as natural and familiar to him as English. He also composed French verses at a later date, while he at any rate wrote the argument of a long poem (*Speculum Meditantis*) in that idiom, and it is probable that this composition is typified in one of the three volumes on his monument; and, as if he were destined in his own person to exemplify the confusion of tongues and the struggle between various dialects which prevailed in his day, Gower also persevered for years together in trying to write Latin verse. In addition to a few shorter pieces and the Latin headings to his English poem, he composed many thousand distiches on the subject of the rise of the villeins, under the title of *Vox Clamantis*, which consisted of several books, in which he endeavoured with

the most wearisome diffusiveness to investigate and describe the causes that led to this occurrence, and the nature of the corruption of the several classes of society. The poet was equally unsuccessful in the choice of the form in which he expressed his ideas, and the position which he assumed in relation to the wide party differences of his times. He attacked ecclesiastics and monks on their own ground, although he was a layman, writing in French, but speaking English as his mother tongue. His Latin, however, it must be confessed had a natural, almost modern, and not unpleasing flow, notwithstanding his adherence to the affectation and metrical rules of the schoolmen. His views never lead him to any definite conclusions, for while he seems bound by the trammels of the past, he is nevertheless forcibly drawn towards the new ideas which threatened to destroy the existing order of things. It was only at a later period that he was able so far to reconcile his conflicting views in regard to the choice of language, as to venture to write in English, and even this was not done until he had been stimulated by the great and successful example of Chaucer.

As natives of the same country, and equals in age, their frequent visits to London and the court must early have brought these two poets together, and we find that when Chaucer went to Italy, in May, 1378, he appointed Gower together with another friend as his trustees. The brother-poets moreover greeted each other in their several works; for while Chaucer dedicates his graceful poem of Troilus and Creseide to the "moral Gower and the philosophic Strode," as he not inaptly distinguishes them, Gower in return sends him in his English poem a flattering greeting through the goddess

Venus. Their views, as well as their individual experiences of life, could scarcely, however, have conduced to their intimacy, although there is no ground for assuming that subsequent differences produced an estrangement between them. Although both ultimately adhered to the new dynasty, their conduct in this matter was influenced by very different motives; but although Chaucer may in no way have biassed the mind of his brother-poet in regard to politics, he undoubtedly exerted a decided influence on his opinions as to language, notwithstanding the many differences which characterized their respective modes of composition, for it is certain that Gower began to discard other dialects in favour of English as soon as he perceived the success that had attended Chaucer's use of their native tongue; and it is to this resolution that we owe the third of his three great tomes, the *Confessio Amantis*, which comprises no less than thirty thousand verses.

Gower must have begun this comprehensive work prior to 1386, as the prologue of the first edition relates the manner in which he had been stimulated to undertake this labour, at the suggestion of Richard II., on the occasion of their meeting on the Thames, between Westminster and London, when the king asked him to "booke some new thing." And hence the poet could not at that period have ranked himself on the side of the king's enemies. The second edition, with a thoroughly different prologue and epilogue, is, however, dedicated to the Earl of Derby, and thus testifies to the change of opinions that had taken place in Gower, and shows that his work must have been finished somewhere about the year 1393. Both the phraseology and the

versification bear evidence that their mode of treatment had become more difficult to the aged author; but notwithstanding such blemishes, his work exhibits a certain facile smoothness which rises superior to the dryness of the subject and the unskilfulness of the construction. Indeed many passages read remarkably well, and show a natural talent for narration. After a somewhat wearisome introduction, in which the good old times are lauded to the skies, without any proofs being adduced to verify the author's statements, there is nothing to interest the reader beyond a severe criticism on the condition of the church, which however is followed by a no less violent protest against the Lollards. We next find the poet suffering from the woes of love, which, as a matter of course, befall him in the month of May, when he is listening to the song of the birds in a leafy grove, and he goes on to tell us how he poured forth his bitter complaint to Venus and her gentle son. The goddess at length takes pity on the sufferer, and sends to him her own priest, Genius, in order that he may shrive him, and after giving him absolution, show him the way which he must follow. The priest and his penitent hereupon go through a course of all the collective vices and virtues. In accordance, no doubt, with highly moral purposes, the lover has to listen to a number of repulsive and enticing phases of life, after each of which the subject is duly argued and disputed, in strict accordance with the rules of scholastic dialectics, and after this process has been repeated over and over again, through eight long books, to the intense weariness of the reader, the unfortunate lover, after having persisted throughout in asserting his

unbounded devotion to a nameless fair one, is at last permitted to receive forgiveness according to the orthodox forms of the confessional, and is dismissed with the direction to use the seven scholastic sciences as his most trustworthy weapons against the seven cardinal sins, receiving moreover the good advice to abstain in future from participating in the follies of love. Such is the loose network which Gower has thrown around a collection of the most varied tales and narratives, which were in fact the main points of interest both to him and to his contemporaries, among whom, as well as among succeeding generations, they formed a perfect encyclopedia of highly popular fiction. The work at all events gives evidence of the extensive reading of the poet, who has drawn his materials from every available book, whether it treated of sacred or profane matters, borrowing from the Bible no less than from the different poems of Ovid, which are largely incorporated in the plan of his composition, passing with equal readiness from the mediæval Gestes of Troy and Alexander to the Pantheon and the Mirror of Kings, by Godfrey of Viterbo, and from Boethius to the romances of Sir Launcelot and King Arthur. We moreover have long episodes and wearying stanzas devoted to the exposition of the secret learning of the Almagest and of the Aristotelian scholastics. Independent creative powers of imagination, or a reference to actual life and the passing times, are not indeed to be met with in Gower's works, but the eight or nine syllabled rhymes—the form of versification common in the middle ages—and the less flexible and somewhat archaic phraseology employed by him, harmonize admirably with the character of his

subjects, while the admixture of the Germanic with the Norman and Latin is fully as marked in Gower as in Chaucer. The popularity which Gower's works maintained far beyond the age in which he lived, and which led the author of the play of Pericles, Prince of Tyre, to borrow his subject directly from him, is due to that preference for the allegorical form which is to be found in all periods of English literature, and to the rich choice of subjects, together with the simple genial tone which pervades the whole.

Very different were the results and progress of Chaucer's mental development. He indeed had also begun with the study of foreign (French) models, and his frequent visits to the Continent had brought him into intimate communion with the cultivators of Italian, and very probably also Flemish poetry; while his works afford ample evidence that he had thoroughly mastered the ponderous Latinity of his day, and was well read in the Norman-French versions of ancient mythology and history. Very fortunately, however, he never made any serious attempts to write poetry, either in outlandish French, or in Latin, and he had the good sense to content himself with turning his knowledge of more highly cultivated forms of literature to the advantage of his own. He began from the first to write in English; and after many years' practice in the use of his mother-tongue, which was then scarcely established, he acquired the right to be considered as one of its first founders, and richly merited the title of father of the English language, which succeeding generations felt pleasure and pride in bestowing upon him. His prose works, his translation of Boethius' *De Consolatione Philosophiæ*,

the scientific treatise on the Astrolabe, and his "Testament of Love," are indeed all evidences of his great versatility; but in the present day they only interest us as so many exercises, in which the practised eye of the philologist can trace the progress of the language under the hands of the author at different periods of his life. Far more important are his poetical works, although we can only venture approximately to determine the date of their composition and the order in which they appeared. His translation of the decidedly uninteresting allegory known as the Romaunt of the Rose, is no doubt the production of his earlier years, as we infer from the language and from the mode of versification, which he copied from the original, and which was also adopted by Gower in his English poems. The translation, however, attracted some notice even on the Continent, for the somewhat common-place French poet, Eustace Deschamps, flattered by seeing his soft-sounding French translated into rough Saxon, felt himself called upon to laud "the great translator, the noble Geoffrey Chaucer," in a composition of many strophes. Happily the poet did not long continue to occupy himself with such subordinate labours, and his next productions, among which we must reckon the poem "on the Death of Blaunche the Duchesse," "the House of Fame," and several smaller pieces, show independence and originality in the invention as well as in the arrangement of the subject. "The Legend of Good Women," as well as "The Court of Love," indicate a still higher degree of development. The trammels of foreign pedantry soon gave way to a fresh individual force of imagination, which was based upon the possession of a warm, expansive heart, an

observing eye and a sound judgment, together with a genuine reality closely allied to nature, and the true poetic gift of representing life as it is. Nature, love, and the pleasures of life, had long been celebrated by Chaucer in popular songs, which, as Gower makes Venus assert, resounded from one end of the land to the other. We would gladly resign some of the works which have come down to us, if we could recover these lyrical productions, which must undoubtedly have been genuine national songs. But though these songs are lost, the poet is always true to himself when he describes objects that excite his love and admiration. How well he knows how to depict the month of May, with all its rich luxuriance of blossom, and with what rare feeling he has described that small and unobtrusive blossom of spring—the daisy. His own life, so rich in experience, enables him to estimate with the most perfect accuracy every shade of feeling, from the strongest passion to the slightest emotion of the heart, while his intercourse with the high and the low, with his own countrymen and with foreigners, his familiarity with the pleasures and annoyances of every-day life, and his deep sense of the joys and sorrows of the human heart, combine to endow him with every attribute that can enable a poet to depict with diversified and dramatic reality the time and people among whom he lives, and this he has done in a manner that has nowhere else been attempted in the literature of the middle ages. It would almost appear as if Chaucer had formally laid a plan for the prosecution of this design; we at any rate are led to infer such a purpose from his careful and systematic study of the cotemporaneous poetry of the Italian school. He repeatedly speaks

with the greatest respect of Dante, and gives us even some happily translated verses of the Divina Commedia, while he borrows largely from Boccaccio's works, and is indebted, as he tells us, for one of his tales to a Latin translation of Petrarch, to whose fame he repeatedly alludes. Such studies as these must have contributed largely to the more perfect elaboration of his mother-tongue, for we find that his combinations and application of words are far more perfect than in Gower, and he undoubtedly copied with the most thorough success the beautiful form of the Italian, which he had unweariedly made the object of his study. At one time he wrote only in rhyming Iambic pentameters; but he was also the creator and founder of the stanza of seven lines, modified from the *Ottave Rime*, which he employed in his highly finished and much read version of the legend of Troilus and Cresseide and which maintained its place in English poetry for nearly two hundred years. It was thus that he successfully applied himself to master the form as well as the matter of his subject; but it was not till towards the close of his life, although still in the full maturity of his powers, that he began his great poem; for it would appear with tolerable certainty that it was not till after the year 1386 that he applied himself to the production of that work which was destined to win for him a crown of immortal fame, and which will always rank as the noblest monument of English poetry, prior to the composition of the incomparable plays of Shakspere.

The framework of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales embraces a rich collection of legends and narratives. Its plan may perhaps have been suggested by that of the

renowned Decameron, in the same manner as Gower may possibly have borrowed the framework for his Moral Tales, the binding, as it were, of his Encyclopedia, from the Italians. Instead, however, of adopting the tame and trivial device of assembling a circle of Florentine youths and maidens, who are only actuated by the one object of hearing and narrating tales, and who might as well have made the number a thousand as a hundred; and instead, like Gower, of drawing a pedantic and wearying scene of a confessional, Chaucer has sketched in bold and sharp outlines a picture of the social condition of his cotemporaries, and made his figures stand picturesquely and boldly forth, in all the vivid, many-sided variety of reality.

Who has not heard of the far-famed sanctuary of Canterbury, where rested the bones of the Archbishop Thomas Becket, who bravely met his death to uphold the cause and arbitrary rule of the Romish Church, and who, venerated as the national saint of England, became renowned as a martyr and worker of miracles? To that sanctuary, year by year, and especially in the spring months, crowds of devout pilgrims flocked from every part of the Christian world; and although such pilgrimages were no doubt often undertaken from the most laudable motives, it is certain that even in the fourteenth century they had become amongst the great masses of the people a mere pretext for every kind of diversion, for purposes of lucre, and even for the indulgence of every form of sinful excess. Fairs and markets recurred periodically, and while on the one hand these occasions brought more clearly to view the deadly plague-spot of the old ecclesiastical system, they were on the other hand

the means of drawing the various classes of society more closely together, and thus gave free scope to the interchange of those ideas, which were destined finally to put an end to the worship of saints and to many other human innovations in the Church of Christ. It was such a pilgrimage as this, that Chaucer took for the framework of his great poem, and as a Kentish man, he was probably able to describe from experience and personal observation all that occurred on an occasion of this kind.

The inimitable prologue of the work, which, although it comprises twenty thousand verses, scarcely reached one-half of the originally intended dimensions, begins with a short description of spring, when after the showers of April, the sun bids all things bud and blossom in the groves and fields, when the birds make melody, and men from every part of the land long to go on pilgrimages and seek the blissful martyr of Canterbury. At such a season—and some writers have calculated that Chaucer refers to the 27th of April, 1383—the poet was tarrying with this purpose in view at the house which was long afterwards widely celebrated under the sign of The Tabard, in the High Street of Southwark, where pilgrims were wont to assemble from every part, and where they found good accommodation both for themselves and their horses, before they set forth on their way. Towards evening, when the host's room was filled, Chaucer had already made acquaintance with most of the guests, who were of all conditions. The nine and twenty persons who composed the party are introduced to us with the most life-like colouring. A Knight appropriately heads the

list. For years his life has been spent either in the field, or in the Crusades; for he was present when Alexandria was taken, helped the Teutonic knights in Prussia against the Lithuanians and Russians, fought with the Moors in Granada, with the Arabs in Africa, and with the Turks in Asia. One may see by his dress that he seldom doffs his armour; but however little attention he pays to externals, his careful mode of speech and his meek and Christian-like deportment betray the true and gentle knight. He is accompanied by his son, a slim, light-haired, curly-headed youth of twenty, the perfect young Squire of his day, who is elegantly and even foppishly dressed. He has already made a campaign against the French, and on that occasion, as well as in the tournay, he has borne him well, in the hope of gaining his lady's grace. Love deprives him of his sleep, and like the nightingale, he is overflowing with songs to his beloved, yet he does not fail with lowly service to carve before his father at table. In attendance on him is a yeoman, probably one of his father's many tenants, who, clad in green, with sword and buckler and his bow in his hand, his arrows and dagger in his belt, represents with his sunburnt face, that has grown brown in woods and fields, the stalwart race who won for the Plantagenets the victories of Crecy, Poitiers, and Agincourt.

In contrast with this group appears a daughter of the Church, Madame Eglantine, a prioress of noble birth, as her delicate physiognomy and the nicety with which she eats and drinks plainly testify. With a sweet, but nasal tone, she chaunts the Liturgy, and she speaks French, too, by preference; but it is the French of

Stratford-le-Bow, and not of Paris. She would weep if they showed her a mouse in a trap, or smote her "little hound" with the rod. A gold brooch ornamented with the letter A, encircled by a crown bearing the inscription *Amor vincit omnia*, hangs from her string of coral beads. Next to her comes a portly Monk of Benedictine rule, whose crown and cheeks are as smooth as glass, and whose eyes shine like burning coals. He, too, is elegantly dressed; for the sleeves of his robe are trimmed with the finest fur, while a golden love-knot pin holds together his hood. Clear is the sound of the bells on his bridle, for he knows well how to sit his horse, while hare-hunting, which is his special pleasure, and a fat swan upon the board are more to him than the rule of St. Augustine and all the learned books in his lonely cell. The worthy pendant to this stately figure is the Mendicant Friar, whose ready familiarity and good humour make him the friend of the country folks, and the favourite Father Confessor of the young women. No one understands better than he how to collect for his cloister, for he knows how to please the women with timely gifts of needles and knives, while he treats the men in the tavern, of which he always knows where the best is to be found. He lisps his English with affected sweetness, and when he sings to his harp, his eyes twinkle like the stars on a frosty night.

The next in order is a Merchant with his forked beard, his Flemish beaver and his well-clasped boots; he knows the money-exchange on both sides of the Channel, and best of all does he understand how to secure his own interest. Then follow a couple of

learned men. First comes the Oxford clerk, hollow-cheeked and lean as a rake, like the horse on which he rides, with threadbare coat, for he has not yet secured a benefice, but his books are his whole joy, and chief among them is his Aristotle. He knows no greater joy than learning and teaching, yet he shrinks back modestly and timidly, and nowhere pushes himself forward. The other is a widely renowned Serjeant of the Law, who has at his fingers' ends the whole confused mass of all the laws and statutes from the days of William the Conqueror to his own times, and who knows admirably how to apply his learning in his extensive practice. Although his heavy fees and many perquisites make him a rich man, he goes forth on his travels dressed in a plain and homely fashion. Next follows a frankleyn, who is described as the owner of a freehold estate, and who is a man of note in his county, who has already served in parliament as knight of the shire, and has held the office of sheriff. His beard is snowy white, but he still knows how to enjoy life. There is no stint of good eating and drinking in his house, for the dishes on his board come as thick and close as flakes of snow, each in its turn, according to the season of the year.

The working class is further represented by a Haberdasher, a Carpenter, a Weaver, a Dyer, and a Tapestrer, honest industrious folk, each clad in the dress that appertains to his order, and wearing the badges of his guild, which are even adorned with graved silver-work. They all have money and interest enough to be made aldermen at some future time, and their wives would gladly hear themselves called "Madam," and would fain

go to church in long and flowing mantles. With these are associated a cook, who is master of all the delicacies of his art, but who is not the less able to relish a cup of London ale. The "shipman" could of course not be absent from such a gathering, and here we see him as he comes from the west country, sunburnt and clad in the dress of his class, equally prompt to draw a draft of the fine Burgundy that he is bringing home, while the master slumbers in the cabin, or to join in a sea-fight against the foes of his native land. He has visited every shore from Gothland to Cape Finisterre, and he knows every harbour and bay in his course. The doctor of physic is well versed in all branches of his art, for in addition to the skilful practice of his profession, he has systematically studied both astronomy and the science of the horoscope, and is familiar with all the learned Greek and Arabic writers. He dresses carefully and in smart clothes, but he knows how to keep the treasures which he amassed during the pestilence of the Black Death.

Next follows a rich and comely Wife of Bath, who especially attracts the attention of the poet, and who is more communicative in regard to her own affairs than any one else in the company. She wears clothing of the finest stuffs, a broad hat, with a new-fashioned head attire, red, tightly fitting stockings, and a pair of sharp spurs upon her heels. She is already well advanced in years, has been three times to Jerusalem, and has seen Rome and Bologna, Compostella, and Cologne. Her round fair and reddish face looks bold, and shows that after her many experiences of life, it would not be easy to put her out of countenance. She relates to her

fellow-travellers with the most edifying frankness that she has been five times married in her life, and that therefore, independently of other considerations, she is entitled to say a word or two about love. She tells them next, how in her young and giddy days she beguiled and deluded her first three husbands, who were old, but rich, and she does not even withhold from them the narration of some sharp curtain lectures. Her fourth marriage terminated in both parties taking their own way: but her last husband, although he is only twenty years of age, has studied in Oxford, and is not to be drawn away from the perusal of a ponderous tome in which are collected the injunctions of the fathers of the Church to lead a life of celibacy, enriched by examples, culled from ancient and modern times, of the manner in which wives are wont to circumvent their husbands. Once, when in her anger she tore out some leaves of this book, he beat her so hard, that she has ever since been deaf of one ear, but since then they have got on admirably well together. In opposition to this good dame, who, true to her allegiance to the star of Venus, forms one of the most important links of connexion between the different members of the varied circle, we have another admirably drawn character—a poor Parson, the son of humble, but honest peasants, who, notwithstanding his scanty benefice, is ever contented, even when his tithes fall short, and who never failed, either in rain or thunder, to brave the storm, and staff in hand to sally forth to visit the remote members of his flock, wherever sickness or mischance might call him. He was ever ready to comfort the needy, and, undismayed by the pride of the rich, he faithfully and honestly proclaimed the word of

the Lord in his teaching. This is the class from which proceeded the renowned itinerant preachers among the Wiclifites of that day; and though Chaucer himself was no Lollard, his great English heart responded to the call of this genuine evangelical movement, and hence his picture of the good Parson is decidedly drawn in harmony with the Lollard character. The Parson is accompanied by his brother, a hardworking, honest, and pious ploughman; and thus the two belong to the class which was bound to the soil, which they tilled.

Before the poet leaves this rank of the social scale, he brings before us several other prominent characters belonging to the people of the day. There is the Miller, a stout churl, bony and strong, with a hard head, a fox-red beard and a wide mouth. He was not overscrupulous in appropriating to himself some of the corn which his customers brought to his mill. Over his white coat and his blue hood he carried a bag-pipe, and his talk was of sin, wantonness, and obscenity. Next comes the Manciple of an ecclesiastical house, who is connected with at least thirty lawyers, and knows how to make his own profits, while he is buying in for his masters. The Reeve of a Norfolk lord, a man as lean as a rake, closely shaven and choleric, appears dressed in a blue coat, riding a grey horse. In his youth he had been a carpenter, but now no one knows better than he how to judge of the yielding of the seed, or the promise of the cattle. No person could call him to account, for his books are always in the best order, and he and his master are always in good accord. The Summoner of an Archdeacon, with a fiery-red face,

which no Apothecary's art can mend or cool, is justly described as one of the lowest and most villanous of the company. Lustful and gluttonous, he yet cares most for his wine, and when he is thoroughly drunk, he speaks no word but Latin, for he has learnt a few terms while in attendance at the courts. His rival in villany is a Pardoner, who has come straight from the Court of Rome. His hair is as yellow as flax, and his voice is small, like a goat's. He carries in his wallet a lapful of lying relics, which he tries to palm upon the people, and in one day he gets more money than an honest Parson can earn in two months.

Right glad at heart to see such a troop of worthy guests, assembled in his hostelry, mine host; Harry Baily, serves them with good cheer, and while the wine is passing round among the company, he proposes with a boldness, that not unfrequently belongs to his craft, to join them on their pilgrimage, and suggests that it would be a good means of shortening the long way, if each were to tell a tale, both in going and returning, and if the one who gave them the best tale should have a supper at his inn, at the expense of the rest, on their return. He next, without more ado, offers himself as judge for the occasion, a proposition which meets with general approval. The company now retire to rest and early the next morning they take the road to Kent.

This then is the wondrously fresh and vivid framework, in which the individual figures stand boldly forth, each remaining true to his station and individual character, when it comes to his turn to speak. It is assuredly unnecessary after this description to revert

to a comparison with Boccaccio, or even with Gower. The varied group of pilgrims speak for themselves, and indicate, moreover, the different classes of society, between the knight and the miller, which were likely to be brought together on terms of social intercourse at that period. We find here the collective grades of society which were politically represented by the House of Commons, while the higher and more privileged classes, constituting the House of Lords, were of course wholly absent. In the meanwhile, the dramatic groundwork of the picture continues throughout to be kept in view, and we sometimes get a glimpse of the pleasant spots, which are passed in the lovely districts of Kent, and which were then bright in the rich bloom of spring. The pauses and stoppages by the way are filled up with much pleasant discourse, and among the rougher members of the company, by many practical demonstrations of character. Beyond Rochester a Canon with his servant joins the company, after which both take direct part in the discussions of their companions.

But the promise which the poet made of completing his noble plan, he was unfortunately not able to redeem, as death interrupted him in the midst of his great undertaking. Not even the half of the work has been finished, for the poem breaks off before the pilgrims enter Canterbury, and hence to our lasting regret we have lost a description of their doings and sayings when there, their return, and the promised feast. There are, also, several other very obvious indications that this fragment was not even complete in its individual parts, for here and there we meet with discrepancies in the dates and hours indicated. It is the same with

Chaucer's enumeration of the nine and twenty pilgrims, for according to a verse, which has, indeed, very probably been interpolated, besides a second nun, there were also two priests, and we have the tale told by the former and by one of the latter. Then moreover, Chaucer himself and the landlord were of the party, which was further augmented on the road by the addition of two persons. Nor is it quite clear whether each one was only to tell one tale, or whether two narratives were to be told—one on the way out, and the other on the way in—and lastly, we are unable accurately to determine, even after a critical examination of the collective manuscripts, what was the actual order of succession of the various narratives, of which several evidently are pendants to one another, whilst others can scarcely have been placed by the author in the order they were finally intended to occupy.

The present is not the place to give a complete summary of the contents and origin of the twenty-four complete tales, and we must therefore content ourselves with rapidly and briefly indicating their copious variety. The knight, after having drawn the lot to begin, commences the series with the adventures of Palamon and Arcite, which are conceived in accordance with the affected style of the day. When he has ended, the landlord in his character of general master of the ceremonies is about to turn to the monk, when the miller, who, early as it is, has already drunk too much of the Southwark strong ale, rudely interposes, and begins to entertain the company, by relating in the coarsest terms how a student of Oxford once circumvented a stupid carpenter. This irritates the Reeve, who had himself

once been of that trade, and he takes revenge by narrating in the same tone the story of the Mill at Trumpington, where two Cambridge scholars were guilty of a similar trick. Next follows the Cook, who begins in the same strain, but after a few verses of his narrative there is in all the manuscripts a very considerable blank. The Sergeant-at-law, encouraged by the landlord, takes up a more decorous subject, and relates the story of the lovely Constance, which, although perhaps with less grace, occurs also in Gower. Here, probably, in accordance with Chaucer's plan, the Wife of Bath begins the confession of her fine feelings and extraordinary experiences, and then gives her own somewhat richly coloured version of one of the tales of the legend of King Arthur's Round Table, which has also been told by Gower. The Mendicant Friar and the Sumptnour, who are ill-disposed to one another on account of their origin, take care that neither shall be much in debt to the other in respect to the coarse and stinging character of their anecdotes. Hereupon the landlord attempts to rouse the Oxford clerk from his modest diffidence, who, borrowing his subject from Petrarch, proceeds to narrate in graceful strophes the charming story of Griselde, whose angelic patience nothing could destroy. The Merchant then takes his turn, and informs his hearers of the manner in which a blind and jealous old husband lets himself be beguiled in his very presence by his faithless wife and her young lover. Next comes the young Esquire, who, taking his subject from the East, tells the story of the Sultan Cambuscan, although unhappily, he has left it incomplete. He is followed in succession by the Frankelin, with his tale of the lovely

Dorigene, which he says he has borrowed from an old British legend; by the doctor, who draws from classical sources the history of the virtuous Virginia; and the Pardoner, who has many low examples to bring forward from his own sphere of observation. He finds pleasure in narrating the manner in which a merchant was deceived by his wife and his best friend, a jovial young monk; whereupon the prioress relates the miracle which once took place when the wicked Jews tried to circumvent a Christian child. With admirable humour the landlord now attacks the poet himself, who is always looking upon the ground as if he were tracking a hare, and Chaucer, who does not wait to be called upon a second time, at once begins in the verses of Sir Thopas, to parody the conventional rhyme of that day, with all its harsh words, until his hearers are well nigh stunned, and the landlord sharply interposes. With perfect willingness, and far from wishing for an opportunity of display, the Poet yields to their entreaties, and changing from poetry to prose, relates to them the highly moral and virtuous history of Melibœus and the lady Prudentia, which appears to us in the present day even more unbearable than his first contribution, which was unfortunately interrupted. After he has done speaking, the monk gives them some of the conventional and unmeaning poetry of the cloisters, which borrowed its tragical incidents and figures from the Scriptures, including both the Old and the New Testaments. Here the Nun's Priest falls in, appropriately enough, with the nursery fable of the Cock, Chanticleer, on which the Nun relates the legend of Saint Cecilia. Somewhat in opposition to the plan of the work, the Canon's servant

interrupts her with his satirical attacks against the alchemists; on which the Manciple tells the story of the Crow, which betrayed to the husband the faithlessness of his wife, but whether the tale is borrowed from Ovid, Gower, or some other source, is not very certain. The Parson finally declares himself strongly opposed to all fables and scandalous stories, and ends by giving his companions a long, somewhat dry and scholastically orthodox prose sermon, which certainly reminds us less of Wiclif and his adherents than the description which we had previously had of the "parson" himself would have led us to expect. With his Amen the finished portion of the Canterbury Tales closes, for the few concluding lines in which the author, after the manner of Boccaccio, is made to recall all that is sinful in his poem, can scarcely be the production of Chaucer.

It indicates a very limited and senseless comprehension of this great work to reproach the Poet for the coarse ribaldry which he has introduced into these incomparable sketches of genuine national life, for they could as little be spared from his pictures as his adventures of chivalry, his legends, or his moral sermon. It must indeed be admitted that he has been most successful in the tales of the first kind, while he necessarily is obliged to maintain in the others the special tone of colour that belongs to them, and hence the former still retain their original freshness, whilst the latter, independently of their literary interest, have become a dead letter to us. Within the domain which he had so richly cultivated and which he knew how to enliven by such vivid representations, and in his composition of a form of speech, which still survives and which can never grow

wholly obsolete, very few approach him, whilst in respect to genuine poetic realism, he is not even exceeded by Shakespere. He, moreover, understands, as a true poet should, how to retain breadth and unity in the midst of the great diversity of his representation. This is perfectly in accordance with his mode of treating the great political and religious questions of his age, which never appear to have embarrassed him; for, instead of suffering himself to be drawn to opposite extremes, as was the case with Gower, he seems, as far as one can judge, to have arrived at a perfectly clear comprehension, through his own feelings, of the interests which they involved, and hence he was able to treat them with that objectiveness which seems to belong to his whole nature, and to render the work that has made his name immortal as nobly and richly endowed as his own nature. He may not indeed claim to rank equal with the few chosen spirits to whom Fame has granted her noblest laurels; but no one is more worthy than himself of the honourable name of *The Father of English Poetry.*

VIII.

JOHN WICLIF.

With the Normans the principle of uniformity acquired undisputed pre-eminence both in the State and in the Church of England. The island which had first been brought within the fold of Rome by St. Augustine appeared to link itself more and more closely to Romanism in proportion to the temerity and daring evinced by the Church in its aggressive advance to the summit of its power. Speculative and mystic objections to its doctrines, such as the specially gifted mind of John Erigena had started in the early days of the hierarchy, had for centuries past ceased to be advanced; and it was only here and there that a faint echo of the heretical storms that were disturbing the Continent made itself heard on the shores of Britain. Instead of this, the most renowned leaders of scholastic philosophy had laboured assiduously to maintain in England the fundamental basis of the doctrine of the immutability of the Church, and had thus contributed to raise up an impenetrable bulwark against sectarianism. In England the Crown and Mitre were indeed often brought into collision in their efforts to maintain the supremacy to which each laid claim, and at times the contest between

them was sharp; but both prince and people—indeed every class of society, from the summit to the very lowest stratum of the population — seemed disposed to adhere without wavering to the orthodox faith of their fathers.

The Papal Court had succeeded in circumscribing within the narrow limits of nominalism and realism the area of contention for all thinking minds, where they could do no special harm either to the internal or external pretensions of the colossal government of the Church, and where, being entirely surrounded by the powers of the hierarchy, they must always remain under its supervision. It was only when Rome herself, in the thirteenth century, broke down these barriers by the exorbitant pretensions to universal supremacy advanced by her pontiffs, (the Innocents, Gregories, and Bonifaces), and when, by her financial exactions, she had betrayed her own internal corruption, and when the Babylonish exile of her popes to Avignon began to reveal to the still childlike simplicity of Europe the hollowness, weakness and hypocrisy of her rule, that from the ranks of those who had hitherto been her most faithful defenders there arose the first voice of opposition, which was indeed for a time raised only in favour of the State, and with the most anxious desire to avoid the slippery path of heterodoxy. The miserable theses, in which the adherents of Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus so long carried on their bitter warfare of words, first attained notoriety when the former party merged in the order of the Dominicans, and the latter was represented by the Franciscans, by which these two ecclesiastical bodies were thus brought into enmity with

each other. The polemical disputes of that age centred in the very summit of the hierarchy; for the greatest and most influential portion of the Franciscans had taken part with the Emperor Louis IV. in his quarrel with John XXII., not hesitating even to accuse the pontiff himself of heresy, and to demand that he should submit himself to the decision of a council, and thus bow to a temporal power. No one had raised his voice more loudly in this dispute than a Franciscan of English descent, named William Occam, who, having found a safe asylum from the anathemas of Rome under the protection of the Emperor, unsparingly and perseveringly attacked from this place of safety the usurped powers of the Court of Rome, and the moral corruption that was being fostered in the clergy by their riches. It was he above all others who cherished the spirit of opposition; whilst from different sides various antagonistic elements were gathering together, ready to burst with destructive violence over the colossal edifice of the Romish power.

We can scarcely call it a matter of chance that it should have been a countryman of Occam who, urged on by an undaunted spirit, was successful in attacking with hitherto unknown weapons that point of the colossal structure which had hitherto been supposed to be invulnerable. This agitator had, like Occam, been educated in one of those seminaries, in which for some time past the true national strength had flourished with renewed vigour, and had already begun to test its own rising powers. An adherence to the orthodoxy of the Church, and a sturdy maintenance of the doctrines it had once admitted, appear to have characterised the University of Oxford at every period since the twelfth century,

when, together with Bologna and Paris, it first acquired its academic character. But it was almost at an equally early period that an important spring of national life began to flow to every part of the land from the University, which, on that very account, assumed an essentially different place in the history of England from that to which the Sorbonne can lay claim in the annals of France. At the period of the Wars of the Barons against the Crown, the youths studying at the University repeatedly took part in the contest, when their sympathies were unanimously given to the popular party. They were among the first who rose against the extortions of money which were then being made by a Papal Legate; and while they used their hands to throw down the booths of his money collectors, they made free use of their tongues against the person of his eminence. The memorable parliament, in which the nobles sought to deprive Henry III., who was in league with the Pope, of the whole of his prerogatives, was held at Oxford in 1258; and when, a few years later, the same party ranged themselves under the standard of Simon de Montfort, a considerable body of Oxford men took up arms in defence of the rights of the nation. This spirit among the academic youth is due to the circumstance that among their most efficient teachers were numbered Bishop Grosteste and Adam of Marsh, the personal friends of De Montfort, and thus a number of influences were combined to heighten their patriotic feelings and active courage. Everywhere the third order of the State exhibited fresh and active vitality. At Oxford it made common cause with the Franciscans, who had of late advocated similar views to those of the popular

party; and there are still extant letters and songs which originated there, and which breathe a genuine political spirit, as well as a mature judgment regarding questions which then agitated both the Church and the State, while they moreover afford evidence that the Anglo-Saxon spirit had again awakened among the lower and more widely diffused masses of the population, and that it had already taken deep root at the University, which had hitherto constituted the stronghold of Romanism.

The mode of goverment, and the important concessions which Edward I. made to Parliament, had indeed brought the machinery of the State back into its normal course, and hence for a time the inner history of Oxford is closed to us. This, however, was the age in which the first colleges were founded by rich benefactors, when, after a short and last attempt to gain admission for the study of the Roman law, the schools resumed their useless discussions, whilst Roger Bacon was looking with deep and almost prophetic insight into physics, and, alike shunned and feared, was occupied in making wondrous experiments in his solitary tower above the gateway of his college. The special forms of English university life were now founded, but the national spirit seemed to have departed from Oxford, and did not return to it till a new popular excitement roused the English people into opposition to Rome.

The struggle for the crown of France, whose best ally was the Pope at Avignon, rapidly increased the influence and power of the House of Commons. Now, for the first time, the question of a real English nationality

presents itself to our notice; and as this spirit contributed towards the brilliant renown of England, it became a matter of common interest both to the king and people to establish efficient defences against the ever-growing encroachments of the Pope, which were cloaked under the pretence of maintaining supreme spiritual authority. This spirit of opposition received support from the demoralization of the clergy, who, as long as their own lives were fraught with benefit to their fellow-countrymen, had been able to reconcile the claims of the Church with the requirements of the nation. The Mendicant Friars had, through their own fault, been converted from the friends to the opponents of the people; and by their conduct, more especially at Oxford, had excited a rapidly spreading hatred of their order.

In such an age as this, and under such circumstances as these, appeared John of Wiclif. It is supposed that he was born in the village of Wiclif, on the Tees, on the northern boundary of the county of York, where the Norman spirit had only recently influenced the population, which with the exception of its admixture with Scandinavian descent, was of old English origin. The district was peopled by a hardy robust race, who had grown up in intimate relations, both of war and peace, with their Scotch neighbours, and who were respected by their more polished southern countrymen for their keen understanding, and their great intrepidity. In these parts of England the tenure of small freehold properties had retained a firmer footing than in the south; and there is no question that the Wiclifs had for generations past been settled on their own hereditary

patrimony at the place from which they took their name. John Wiclif had been early destined for the Church; and, in accordance with this purpose, he was sent to the University of Oxford; but, unfortunately, neither the year of his arrival there, nor the college of which he became a member, can be fixed with certainty. The late discovery of another John Wiclif increases the difficulty of tracing his academical career, and all that we know definitely in regard to this period of his life is, that in the year 1356, he was a Fellow of Merton College, which had already been long celebrated for its scholastic reputation, and at which Duns Scotus and William Occam had studied, while latterly it had numbered amongst its alumni, Thomas Bradwardin, another remarkable man, who, by his return to the stern doctrine of predestination, as taught by St. Augustine, had entered upon a new path of ecclesiastical reform from within the Church itself, and had even attracted attention in the highest quarters; for we find that Edward III. carried him with him, as his chaplain, during his various foreign campaigns. The example and writings of such men as these were the load-stars that guided this young man, who, in addition to his rich gifts of understanding and feeling, possessed a large amount of zeal and industry. The guides whom he followed soon led him, however, upon paths of inquiry very different from their own. The time at which he lived, and his place of study, led him to turn with zealous industry to the study of the Aristotelian philosophy of that day and of the scholastic theology which was allied to it; and we have the testimony of one of his opponents, that Wiclif speedily

attained such proficiency, that no one at Oxford was his superior, or even his equal, in these subjects. On the other hand we may, however, regard Bradwardin as his predecessor and guide; and there is certainly no doubt that the writings of Robert Grosteste, which were distinguished by their warmth and imagination, and had been carefully read by Wiclif, must have contributed essentially in influencing him to read the Bible with fervour and earnestness, and by studying the Holy Scriptures for himself, to rise superior to the dark pedantry of his times. To these acquirements he added the study of the canon law, which was indispensable to one of his calling, combining with it, as we are told, the knowledge of the Roman civil law, as well as of the common law of England. The latter he studied with special predilection, which, while it had been purposely neglected at all the renowned seats of Romanised culture, on account of its doubtful scientific value, had attained a very high degree of favour in regard both to public and official questions in England. Thus Wiclif early acquired two advantages, which the University did not generally require from her teachers and their scholars, viz., the recognition and knowledge from the fountain head of the eternal principles of Christian ethics, and an acquaintance with the Germanic principles of law, which were at that time gaining ascendency in the estimation of his countrymen over the Roman and feudal systems. Both these points were of great value with regard to his life and efficiency, since they opened his eyes to the truth that Christianity, and the people who professed its doctrines, were destined for far higher and different

vocations than those which the stubborn spirit of Rome had endeavoured to impress upon them. A presentiment of his own destiny seems to have possessed the mind of Wiclif, and he felt that his place was at Oxford, where, to use a modern phrase, he would make for himself a university career, instead of accepting some pastoral charge, and serving, like many of the clergy of his own day, as the cherished pastor of his flock. He received ordination, but he early felt a decided disinclination to become a monk. We unfortunately possess no details of these years of preparation which he passed in industrious reading and study, and in the prosecution of devotional exercises and academic disputations in his own college, and in the University; but certain it is, that the scientific reputation which Wiclif acquired could scarcely have exceeded the purity of his morals, and the genuine Christian course of his life, which appears to have been so blameless from his youth upwards, that much as his most violent opponents may have desired to find grounds of complaint against him, all who have spoken of him have concurred in expressing themselves in reference to these points of his character, in terms of the most unqualified praise. We do not know how far he participated in the academic divisions of that period—the contests of the Boreales, which he himself so worthily represented, and the Orientales—or in the disputes between the University and the town and Government; nor do we know to what extent he entered into the public affairs of England during her great conflict with the continental powers, although these were subjects which must very materially have influenced Oxford-life at that period.

He was, at all events, not blind to the circumstances and signs of the times in which he lived; and, in the year 1356, he ventured upon his first literary production, which consisted of a treatise, entitled the "Latter End of the Church." We are naturally led to speculate on the motives which led to this composition and to ask, whether it was the fearful plague of 1348, with its many concomitant evils, which pursued its devastating course over almost every part of the then known world, or whether it was the condition of the hierarchy and the lower clergy which led him, like so many both before and after his time, to the study and application of the prophecies of the Apocalypse? This much, however, is certain, that he began with a warning call to repentance, and the turning away from sin while it was yet time, specially addressing himself to the servants of the Church, under which term he included the entire body of the hierarchy, from its highest to its humblest supporters.

Very soon, however, Wiclif came down from these mystic heights, and directed his attacks against all assailable opponents in his own immediate vicinity. As early as the year 1360, he entered upon the struggle, which he prosecuted with unwearied perseverance to the end of his life, against the Mendicant Friars generally, but more especially those belonging to the Franciscan Orders. The latter had already been long at variance with the beneficed clergy, before the scientific promise with which their early history had been characterised, was wholly lost. When, however, the originally healthy tendencies of the brotherhood had been wholly smothered by dry formalities, and when

the Minorites strove alike by bad and good means, and mainly for impure purposes, to control the consciences of men by insinuating themselves into families, and when, lastly, they tried to bind the academic youth wholly to their interests, the enmity against them rose to a formidable height. The moral sense of the community had sunk to a deplorably low ebb, and it was owing to a fear of the Franciscans, who had ruined many youths, or, at any rate, gained them over to their own side by deceptive arts, that parents would no longer send their sons to the University. The census, which is said at one time to have shown the astonishing number of 30,000 students, had fallen as low as 6,000, whilst all earnest study was utterly crushed. Richard Fitzralf, Archbishop of Armagh, who had been Chancellor of the University from 1333 to 1347, was the first who endeavoured vigorously to put down this evil, and to excite a systematic agitation against the mendicant orders. In vain, however, did this admirable man plead for the support of the Papal Court at Avignon; for when a statute of the University was passed which aimed at setting bounds to these unprincipled innovations, it was rejected by the Pope with a view of favouring the Franciscans. The head of the Church himself therefore stood in the way of the maintenance of the national spirit, and the ancient authority and forms of the university. At this crisis Wiclif entered the lists, and at once carried with him all the support that could be afforded him by these elements of university government. His attack, as we learn from the thesis that is still extant, under the title of "Reproaches against the Mendicant Friars," unsparingly laid bare the internal corruption of the

brethren, who, with mixed hypocrisy and assumption, concealed the most revolting depravity under the coarse russet robe of their order. The injunction to maintain absolute poverty was, indeed, externally complied with, but in its inner sense it was most grossly evaded; and this corruption next infected the laity, among whom the Franciscans had insinuated themselves as chaplains and confessors, and on whom they preyed like some noxious vermin. The indignation with which the clergy heard such charges as these spoken in plain English words was great, although scarcely greater than the approval with which they were welcomed by the opposite party.

Balliol College, which had been founded by a noble lady of the family who owned Barnard Castle, which was only a few miles distant from Wiclif's birthplace, bestowed a living upon the daring north countryman, and raised him to the dignity of its Master in the year 1361. He must have resigned this place after a year or two, since we find him renting rooms in Queen's College, in October, 1363. In the year 1365, soon after the death of Archbishop Simon Islip, who had selected Wiclif to be the Master of Canterbury Hall, which he had recently founded, Wiclif had a contention with the new primate, who, being friendly to the monks, was anxious to give the mastership to Woodhall, one of their own body. Wiclif took his stand upon the testamentary wishes of the founder, and appealed to the Pope. As the latter, after a long delay of four years, decided against him, Wiclif's opponents declared that to this decision alone was due the bitter hatred which he exhibited against the mendicant orders. The chronological

sequence of events proves the contrary, and still more his own participation in another and far more important matter, in which the Pope himself was specially and individually interested, and from which Wiclif would undoubtedly have held himself aloof, if he had been waiting in a spirit of selfish ambition for the decision of the Roman pontiff.

The dissensions between the King and the State on the one hand, and the Court of Rome on the other, had for some time been constantly on the increase. Stringent laws had been passed against the Romish provisions by which the insular benefices were still constantly bestowed upon foreigners, and English Church-money was poured into the treasury at Avignon; and when the Pope attempted to draw the disputants to his tribunal as the ultimate court of appeal, counter-appeals to foreign courts of jurisdiction were interdicted under heavy penalties. Yet, notwithstanding the difficulties which were daily pressing more and more heavily upon him, Urban V. had the temerity again to advance a claim for that disgraceful tax of a thousand marks which King John in the dark hour of his deepest humiliation had consented to pay to Innocent III., but which Edward I. had refused in express terms to continue, and which for a whole generation had not even been claimed. This was one of the many false steps made at that time by the court of Rome, which seems to have been most thoroughly blind to the actual extent of its powers; and how completely the Pope himself had misjudged the character of Edward III., and of the recently elected Parliament, was proved by the unanimous indignation with which his demands were met. Their only result

was that more stringent statutes were passed to meet the case; while the agents for collecting the fine were punished with the loss of property, and in some cases even of life. At this time a monk who wisely concealed his name, but who, bolder than his superiors, had published a tract, in which he maintained the supremacy of the Pope in England, challenged Wiclif to come forward and refute his proposition, which the latter was not slow in doing, and it is in itself a proof of the consideration in which the future Reformer must have been held, that he should have been individually referred to on the occasion. At that period he was already chaplain to the king, as we learn from his reply, which bears the date of 1367. In this document, in which he had, with great judgment, followed the form of a debate in the House of Lords, he takes his stand wholly on the ground of nationality and legality; while on the strength of his knowledge of English law, he maintains the perfect independence of the crown and country, and repudiates the papal claim as a national insult. The Anglo-Norman island of Great Britain had in truth never sunk to the level of a dependence of the Papal Chair, like the Norman sovereignties in southern Italy.

Such a skilful defender, who never lost sight of his Oxford controversy with the Minorites and Dominicans, was a person whom the high authorities, who were contending against the same enemies, were necessarily anxious to draw more closely to themselves. Thus, when Wiclif, in the year 1372, received his degree of Doctor of Divinity at Oxford, and his teaching acquired a much more extensive range of influence, both in regard to ecclesiastical and social questions, his connexion

with the Court and Government rapidly increased. A man like Wiclif could indeed scarcely have failed to stand well with the executive Government; and hi popularity both at the University and among the people at large, continued most deservedly to augment from day to day. In the year 1373, we find that his merits were rewarded by the gift of additional benefices, such as the rectory of Ludgarshall, and a prebend's stall at Westbury. In respect to the motives which have from time to time been maliciously assigned as the cause of his opposition to the papal supremacy, it is very significant to note that Pope Gregory XI. did not hesitate to confirm these appointments in a special brief, in which he commends the great learning of the celebrated theologian, and his spotless course of life. Immediately after this period, however, Wiclif stood in very different relations to the Pope.

The negotiations for an armistice between England and France, which were opened at Bruges, led also about this time to an attempt to arrive at some satisfactory understanding with the Pope. For this purpose the doctor of divinity, John de Wiclif, was appointed by royal letters patent to be one of the commission, which, under the presidency of the Duke of Lancaster, had long been endeavouring, but without success, to settle these two highly important matters. And although Gregory did make a few apparent concessions in regard to the preposterous claims of his predecessor, he was in fact only following the old and crafty policy of Rome, and endeavouring by subterfuges and procrastination to avoid yielding a single point under dispute. The Papal Court neither could nor would renounce the system which

it had hitherto pursued in England in regard to church fines, annates, and other remunerative methods of raising money, nor would it relinquish its obnoxious practice of forcing foreign prelates upon the English Church. This tortuous policy necessarily led to a rupture of the conferences in the year 1376 without any result, while it redoubled the indignation of Parliament against the Pope. We unfortunately have no definite information in regard to Wiclif's share in these transactions; but there are, at all events, two circumstances connected with his residence in Flanders, which were of no common importance in reference to his life and efficiency. In his intercourse with the papal plenipotentiaries he had obtained so clear an insight into the lying and shuffling policy of Rome, that in his just indignation at all that he had himself seen and heard, he, like Luther in later times, hesitated not to enter into personal contest with him who called himself the vicegerent of Christ on earth. In addition to this he had become more closely connected with the Duke of Lancaster, who at that period, owing to the age and infirmity of his father, King Edward, possessed the highest influence in the state. John of Gaunt was disposed from principle, although as much from ambition, to favour the rule of the laity, and he therefore opposed the aggressions of Rome no less than the pretensions of the native English clergy. He hoped by the help of the popular party to further his own ends, and though these, like his moral conduct, must be characterised as the reverse of pure, he was a man of comprehensive ideas, and animated by a lively interest in all the spiritual aspirations of his age. He had known how to attract to himself the affection of

the poet Chaucer, and he now attached to his person the great theologian, who had already entered upon the path of ecclesiastical reform. Who can say what a beneficial influence his communion with these gifted spirits might have exercised on his mind if his natural character had been similar to that which future ages admired in the noble elector of Saxony? His regard for Wiclif, even as early as on his return from Bruges, was shown by the fact, that the crown, no doubt at the suggestion of Lancaster, rewarded his labours by presenting him to the valuable living of Lutterworth in Leicestershire. The Duke, moreover, protected him at a later period, when he had adopted a more decided tone in those writings and addresses, in which he inveighed with ever increasing severity against the horrible depravity of the secular and monastic clergy, not even sparing the Pope, who had perverted the power of the keys of Rome into an instrument of unholy usurpation, and who had become the Antichrist, as prophesied in the Apocalypse. Wiclif too, in his turn, adhered to the Duke, when the latter was threatened with disgrace. The so-called Good Parliament of the year 1376, had indeed expressed itself with severity against the lust for wealth which prevailed in the sinful city of Avignon, and against the holy Father himself, of whom it said that God had commanded him to feed his flock, but not to fleece them; while it had insisted that these abuses should be discontinued, and that the Anglican Church should be put upon the same footing which it had occupied in the days of Gregory the Great. But the opposition on the part of the English prelates, who for a time had taken part in the popular excitement against Rome, now began to gain strength,

and their adherents soon formed a considerable majority even in the lower house against Lancaster, whose government they successfully attacked on the ground of its illegality. This influence was, however, not wholly destroyed, owing undoubtedly to the steady adhesion of Wiclif and his special adherents. At this very time the Duke, acting by authority, and in conformity with the views of the anti-papistical party in parliament, had passed a remarkable act in favour of the proposition, that the Government should adhere to its resolutions to forbid money being sent to Avignon, even in the event of the Pope having recourse to ecclesiastical punishments. A feeling in opposition to Romanism was thus continually being fostered in England, while Wiclif was gradually led to a more thorough comprehension of the questions at issue. As long as his patron maintained his position, he directed his attacks more and more against the inner being and the spirit of the doctrines of the Church, rather than as heretofore against the more external frame-work of the hierarchy.

The old-established and conservative party in the State determined to resist this opposition both on the part of the reformer and his powerful patron. William Courtnay, Bishop of London, a man sprung from a haughty aristocratic family and full of priestly arrogance, induced the clergy, assembled in convocation, to summon the Oxford doctor to answer for his heresy. Accordingly, on the 19th of February, 1377, he was commanded to appear before the commission sitting in St. Paul's Church, London; but it is not easy to understand why he was thus brought before a tribunal beyond the precincts of his own diocese. Wiclif obeyed the summons,

but he entered the Church accompanied by the Duke in person, and by another friend and well-wisher, Lord Henry Percy, the earl marshal of England. A numerous retinue of knights accompanied them, and a crowd of citizens followed them into the sacred building. Both parties exhibited great irregularity of conduct, and a tumultuous conflict seemed to be impending. When the Bishop rose to forbid the Lord High Marshal from exercising the prerogatives of his office on consecrated ground, and gave way to a passionate outbreak of temper because Percy, pitying the debility of the accused, had offered him a seat, there arose a violent altercation between Lancaster and the prelate, in which the former gave utterance to threatening and offensive language. The consequence was a fearful tumult within the Church itself, and an uproar in the streets, during which the Londoners, who, from other causes, were irritated against the Duke, without giving themselves time to consider, took the part of their bishop. It was not without personal risk that Lancaster and his companions were able to secure their own safety and that of their *protégé*. A few days sufficed, however, to show that the chief administrative power of the State was still in the hands of the Duke, for the populace was soon obliged to submit with all humility, while the clergy, although embittered to the utmost, were compelled to desist from their meditated acts of vengeance. These events were speedily followed by the death of Edward, to whose age and feebleness the past disturbances were in a great measure due. Under his grandson and successor, Richard II., the Duke of Lancaster, as the uncle of the young king, enjoyed a position which enabled

him to exercise still greater power. The mother of the young king and her court made no secret in the meanwhile of their anxious wishes for the success of Wiclif in the ecclesiastical controversy in which he was engaged; and this sympathy on the part of the Government with the new opinions, was also manifested in many different ways on various other occasions.

But the opposite party did not either fail to benefit to the utmost of their power by the change in the Government. The lay opposition adhered to the clergy, who hastened to appeal to the Pope, entreating him, without delay, to bring the heretic to judgment. In five bulls, bearing the date of the 2d May, addressed to the crown, the primate and bishop, and the universities, the Pope required and authorised these powers to take stringent measures to quell the special danger which was to be apprehended, lest the heads of the State and the nation should be infected by the new heresies. Express reference was made to the dangerous sympathy with these opinions, which prevailed in the court circle. But the University of Oxford could not be induced to persecute and expel the man who stood higher than any other of her teachers and scholars, for no better reason than that he had begun to attack the monks and their system. The University was, nevertheless, obliged to let him go forth, in January, 1378, to present himself in the hall at Lambeth, where the zealous and exasperated heads of the Church had assembled to constitute themselves into a court of judgment over matters of faith. He again appeared before the tribunal, but on this occasion without his armed and powerful supporters. Scarcely, however, had the court been formed, when the London

citizens thronged into the hall, urged in this instance by anxiety for his safety. They tumultuously surrounded the archiepiscopal palace, and eagerly pressed into the chapel, where they loudly demanded that no harm should be done to the person of this honoured man. The Princess of Wales, moreover, despatched a knight to the assembly, who was commissioned to protest against judgment being given upon any ground whatever. Once more, then, the ecclesiastical court was constrained to yield to the power of the laity, and to content itself with the written declaration of the accused, that he would be perfectly ready to recant whenever he should be convinced of his errors. He, however, unconditionally maintained the proposition that popes and priests are sinful men like other mortals, that limits must be put to the secular pretensions of the Papal Court, and that the State has the right to oppose the shameful mal-appropriation of ecclesiastical funds. The law of Christ, he said, stood higher than the often upheld, but shamefully misused, power of the papal keys. It is a falsehood to assert, as has frequently been done by Catholics, that Wiclif made an abject recantation at Lambeth, in order to escape martyrdom; and that it was only in a pamphlet, which was composed subsequently to the trial, that he ventured to express those opinions which it is certain that he had actually laid before the court itself.

The papal power was, in the meanwhile, not in a position to wreak its vengeance upon him; for scarcely two months later there broke out a schism, which was not wholly settled until thirty years afterwards, at the Council of Constance. This was, indeed, a triumph and an ample confirmation of Wiclif's propositions, which

had, moreover, never been controverted; and the reformer soon took occasion in a new tract to expose the great significance of this monstrous scandal of Christendom. "Let us put our trust in Christ," he exclaims, "for the head of the anti-Christ is split into two, and the one half is contending against the other. The word of God alone can now save men from destruction."

It was well for himself and for the future destiny of the Gospel in England, that Wiclif had recourse at this moment to weapons whose edge nothing can rust. For if he had attacked only the jurisdiction and supremacy of the popes, he would scarcely have fared better than Marsilius of Padua, or Johannes Gandavensis, with whose heresies the recent judgment of the Papal Court had confounded his opinions. But he had for a long time appealed to the Bible in his fierce and dangerous conflict with the Church; and now the time was come that his knowledge of the Word sufficed to enable him to stand forth before Christendom, and demand an answer to the questions, What say the Scriptures? and what say the Decretals? and in how far do they agree?

We will now consider the attitude which he assumed in regard to the study and authority of the Scriptures. Since the beginning of his academic course, and in the midst of the learned yet practical labours, into which he had thrown himself with the greatest ardour, the word of God, or the law of the Lord, as he delighted to call the Scriptures, became more and more dear to him. When the reading of the Scriptures had absorbed all his mind, and filled his heart with peace, he began with the most eloquent enthusiasm to expound the Bible both in his class and from the pulpit. The teachers and students

of Oxford listened with rapt attention to the life-giving words of his preaching; and soon, in accordance with the scholastic habits of the day, they designated him universally by the title of the *Doctor Evangelicus*. It was then that the idea first dawned in his mind of transferring the dead letter of the Latin version of the Scriptures into the recently developed speech of his mother-land. He himself stated at a later period, that he had seen in the hands of the young Queen Anne, the wife of Richard II. and the daughter of the Emperor Charles IV., a copy of the Gospel, in which, in addition to the Latin, there was also a Bohemian and a German translation, which had specially delighted him; but it is an error to refer the origin of his design to the sight of this beautiful MS., since the royal pair were not married till the beginning of 1382. It is possible that one of the numerous MSS. in which pious Anglo-Saxon monks had transcribed considerable portions of the Old and New Testament in their own tongue, may have fallen under his notice. It is sufficient for us, however, to know that this great idea was ever present to his mind from the first, and that he presented his fellow countrymen with the gift of the whole Bible in English—a task which his predecessors in the work had only done in fragments and paraphrases, and the like of which had long been vainly wished for in Germany and Bohemia. His was destined to be a translation into his mother-tongue, such as that tongue had become after eventful periods of the national history, and by a remarkable admixture of native dialects, which had made it the property at once of the high and the low, and the characteristic exponent of a na-

tion rapidly advancing to mental and physical independence.

This great work, which appears to have occupied him especially during the years 1379 and 1380, was indeed of necessity based exclusively upon the Vulgate, for Wiclif did not understand the fundamental Hebrew or Greek texts, and the age in which he lived had as yet no knowledge of linguistic criticism. But a faithful verbal translation of the Bible, in a form of speech comprehensible to the whole people, was a treasure possessed by no other modern nation. It was accomplished chiefly through Wiclif's own exertions, although recent research has shown that some of his best pupils must have aided him truly and effectually in the work; for it is to be noted that there prevailed during the next few years a perfect emulation among the Wiclifites in this department of study. The English translation of the Bible of the fourteenth century, although extant only in individual portions and incomplete copies, is in fact the best specimen of the English prose of that day, in which the Norman or Romanized element had thoroughly permeated the Saxon groundwork; for, in addition to the natural force of the latter, we cannot overlook the presence of a certain facility in the mode of bringing abstract ideas before the notice of the reader. How much this was the case is proved by the wonderful effect which was at once produced by the appearance of the volume. It was now for the first time that the lower classes of the people began eagerly to learn to read, and to approach directly to the fountain-head from whence life and truth flow. If we assume the point of view taken by an orthodox chronicler, who has many

things to relate to us of Wiclif, and who probably had known him personally in Leicestershire, we can hardly wonder at the feeling which prompted him to upbraid the Reformer, whom he attacks on the ground that he had cast his English Gospel like a pearl before swine, and converted the jewel intrusted to the clergy into a plaything for the laity, by making the heavenly talent of the Church the common property of the people. According to him, the holy text of the Scriptures had been desecrated by its translation into the mother-tongue; for now, all who had learnt to read, whether they were men or women, were more familiar with it than the most learned clergy of old. It was, in truth, the first irreparable breach in the bulwark which the hierarchy believed that they had rendered secure by the help of the Vulgate. Even during the middle ages, and amid the violence of orthodox reaction, the Bible penetrated so deeply into the minds of the people that the knowledge of it could not again be wholly eradicated notwithstanding all the efforts of the Inquisition. In the improved Protestant translations of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, this translation was not overlooked; and no one will deny that England owes to the old evangelical doctor of Oxford the first impulse towards those tendencies from which has sprung the colossal enterprise of the present Society for the propagation of the Bible.

But, as with his greater successor, Luther, this labour was considered as merely a means towards a higher end. At this period, he gives utterance still more clearly to his conviction that, as every man has to give account for his actions, so also must he be guarded in respect to the causes that give rise to them. The Holy Scriptures,

he says, are the only rule and gauge for the faith and life of a Christian. This proposition became to the Reformer the central point, from which emanated all the ramifying branches of his activity. The contest with the mendicant friars, in which he attacked the old system, was not at variance with those evangelical doctrines of faith by which he endeavoured in a series of treatises and pamphlets to establish a new system of belief. He repeatedly embraced both points of his teaching in short but lucid propositions. In one place he says, "As Christ is so immeasurably higher than any other being, so, also, do the law of the Lord and the word of God stand immeasurably higher than all human argument and authority." And again, elsewhere, he says, in a tone of quiet, almost national, humour, "If there were a hundred popes, supported by all the mendicant friars turned into cardinals, we could only believe them in regard to matters of faith in as far as they are able to verify their words from the Bible."

We see that he had from principle entirely renounced that which the Church of the West had for centuries past prescribed to all believers as immutable dogmas. The law of God had become to him of far greater weight than the decretals of popes and councils. He had indeed no disposition to investigate the condition of the ancient Church of the apostolic times, for his mind had no tendency towards historical investigation, and still less was it inclined to what we should now term philological inquiry; nor, indeed, could it very readily have acquired such a bias, considering the scholastic discipline in which he had been trained. But Wiclif had already begun to free himself from these

once powerful influences; and this he had done in the practical manner, and in accordance with the genuine national tendency which he had succeeded in giving to the results which were the unavoidable consequences of his first propositions. He had indeed taken the bull by the horns, when he boldly declared war against the worst perversion of the Romish doctrine, as taught in the dogma of transubstantiation; for he thus shook the corner-stone of the whole system, as John Erigena had probably meditated doing in the ninth century, pronouncing it to be at variance both with Scripture and common sense.

The path of inquiry by which he arrived at this conclusion had necessarily started from his chief premises that the commands of God, and not those of man, were to be obeyed. Through the Scriptures, however, man learns that the Son of God is the only Mediator between the Father and His creatures, and that it is only by entire faith in Christ that he can be helped to perfect happiness: for neither his own works, nor the worship of the saints, with which the world was at that time filled, is able to contribute to its attainment; but God in His mercy and almighty power raises the repentant sinner, through the Son, from the dust, in which he lay; so that faith and repentance are gifts from above, and must not be imputed to man as acts of merit. It is therefore only the elect who constitute the community of saints—the community of God or the true Church. Here he most completely departed from that which his contemporaries understood by the Church; for in their eyes it was only an institution composed of the higher and lower clergy, as well as of his sworn opponents, the

monks, and to which the laity belonged merely in respect to the outer limits that had been drawn around it by the hierarchy. According, however, to his conception of the Church, it consisted of all true believers, who had access to the Divine mercy independently of any human intervention; while hypocrites and godless persons, even though they ranked among the highest prelates, did not belong to it. This is the same idea of the priesthood, which so essentially contributed to the development of the Reformation in Germany.

Wiclif subsequently adhered with signal success to the same principle, when he began to attack the doctrine of the sacrament. It is well known how much the Catholic idea of the inextinguishable and spotless nature of the consecration of the priesthood contributed to the development of the theory of the Eucharist; and how, conversely, the holiness of the sacrament must have served to render the priestly character invulnerable to all attacks from the secular power. Each of these dogmas mutually strengthened the other, and raised the Romish doctrine to its culminating point by supplying the arbitrary proposition, which was regarded as incontrovertible, that the bread and wine were converted by the hand of the consecrating priest at the altar into the body and blood of the Lord, while their external form and taste were said, in the scholastic phraseology of the Church, to be merely accidents. Every earnest reformation of the Church has been directed against this bulwark of the system, although different sides of the question have been aimed at by the different antagonists. While Huss opposed the keeping the cup from the people, and thus endeavoured to fill up

the chasm which divided the priesthood and the laity, and Luther especially objected to the Mass as idolatrous, Wiclif persistingly attacked the erroneous doctrine of the conversion of the bread into the body. He looked upon that which was regarded as the sum of orthodoxy as mere heresy, and in this repect his convictions did not deviate very widely from the point of view assumed by the German Reformers. Taking his stand on evangelical ground, he more especially attacks two points, viz.—the monstrous and heathenish doctrine that the priest, by the mystic act of consecration, can produce the Body of the Lord, and that the Host, after it has been thus consecrated, should be worshipped. The priesthood of the Church no longer appear to him as the representatives of Christ: for their elevation above others seems to him on the contrary mere blasphemy, and the worship of the sacrament rank idolatry. But here we pause to ask, what he was able to substitute in their place, and how he succeeded in bringing back to its original footing an institution which had designedly been adapted to the most unspiritual requirements of the human heart.

The twelve theses in which he openly discussed this most important subject in the spring of 1381, and the writings in which he subsequently often recurred to it, do not set forth his view with clearness and distinctness. It seems, indeed, as if he had himself by no means been satisfied with his own final solution of the most prominent contradictions. He and his adherents most clearly and distinctly maintain that the visible sacrament at the altar is actual bread and wine. Yet Wiclif attempted repeatedly to answer the question, how both were converted into the body and blood of Christ; and this he

did in various ways, but without arriving at any definite conclusion. In the meanwhile, he approached very decidedly to the doctrine of Zuinglius, that the visible bodies are only signs and emblems of that which is represented by them; while he drew a very unsatisfactory distinction between natural bread and that which in the sacrament is assumed to acquire the significance of the body of Christ. In another part of his theses, however, he almost adopts Luther's view, asserting the actual presence of the body of Christ in the sacrament; he does not, however, assume that the body is appreciably and tangibly present, but merely that its properties have been transferred to the consecrated bread. This, therefore, would constitute simultaneously the actual bread and the actual body, a conclusion whose contrarieties no human sophistry can reconcile, and which Wiclif endeavours to strengthen by insisting, contrary to the Lutheran view, that faith is indispensably necessary to the beneficial participation of the Eucharist.

On this doctrine, however undeveloped and incomplete we may regard it, Wiclif boldly took his stand, confident in the eternal truth of the Scriptures; while his translation of the Bible, to which he at the same time appealed, met with a glad and welcome hearing from all ranks and classes of the people. But it was not only by his writings that he appealed to his countrymen; for at this time he had recourse more fully than ever to preaching and public exhortation. Indeed, for several years, preaching had been his chief and most favourite occupation. He was wont to take the practical points of doctrines for his texts, and by their help to expose the fallacies of the hierarchical

theories. In this respect he furnished a brilliant example to all the beneficed clergy, who had been accustomed almost wholly to neglect the duty, and to permit the mendicant friars to take out of their hands the office of preaching to the people, a task for which they evinced decided predilection. It was Wiclif's habit to speak to his congregation in purely biblical language, and in a truly evangelical manner; and the powerful result of his teaching is sufficiently manifest in the many hundred fragments and extracts from his sermons which we meet with in the manuscripts of that day, and in the many God-fearing men who were inspired by his noble example to follow in his footsteps.

We will say no more of the course pursued by this remarkable man in his endeavours to attain the high aim which he strove to reach in bringing about a reformation of the national faith. The more decidedly he expressed his convictions, the higher waxed the wrath of all those who were placed in situations of authority, and who were resolved not to yield the very least either of the external or internal supports of the Roman Catholic system of doctrine. They indeed required some time to recover from the confusion into which the papal schism had thrown the Christian world. The twelve theses on the Eucharist presented, however, a welcome handle for a new attempt to attack the heretic, who was continually growing more dangerous to the Church. The first step in this direction was taken at Oxford, where William Berton, the Chancellor of the University, who was predisposed in favour of the hierarchy, submitted these theses to the examination of a commission of twelve doctors of divinity, among

whom, as many as eight were monks. The sentence, as might be expected, condemned the theses as heretical; while all who quoted them in their lectures, or who listened to their enunciation, were threatened with all the punishments that were in any way compatible with the academical system, from interdict to imprisonment. It is related that Wiclif, who still maintained his place in the University, was in the act of expounding his propositions in the priory of the Augustines, when the proctor of the court entered, holding in his hand the resolution that had just been passed, and commanded him to cease speaking. Wiclif appears to have been overcome for a moment by surprise, but speedily recovering himself, he protested against the proceeding on the ground of his disputation being public. He seems, however, for a time to have abstained from any further prosecution of the contest by word of mouth; but the process gave occasion to the publication of one of his most important pamphlets, entitled "The Wicket," in which he considered the meaning of the words, "This is my body;" and to judge by the extraordinary approval which this production won from its readers, both at the time and in after years, it may, perhaps, not be too much to assert, that it must have become a gate of life to thousands, and hundreds of thousands.

But while Wiclif was writing this little work, or rather just after it had appeared, a storm burst over England, which, in its violence, threatened to overwhelm and throw down all attempts at ecclesiastical improvement, and all authorities, both in Church and State. The fearful insurrection of the peasantry, which took place in June, 1381, it was asserted, long after-

wards, had been brought about mainly through the preaching and doctrines of Wiclif. It will not be difficult to refute this assertion as a malignant falsehood, if we merely take into consideration the thoroughly different origin of that social movement. As early as the middle of the fourteenth century, after the burgher classes had not only become socially and politically independent, but after they had even acquired a direct share in the management of public affairs, the classes still lower in the scale of society began to bestir themselves. This body consisted in England of different grades of villeins and serfs, as they had existed since the Conquest, of free but poor artisans in town and country, and the ordained brethren of the different guilds and crafts belonging to the lowest ranks of the clergy. The exclusive and once beneficial organization of the feudal system had long been seriously impaired. The subdivided fiefs were now constantly becoming merged into large estates, owned by burgher possessors; and the cultivation of pasture-ground, and the management of sheep, appeared, on account of the profit to be derived from the wool, to be more remunerative than mere arable land. In the towns, the guilds held supreme sway, and tyrannized over the lives of the poorer classes who did not belong to them. Thus the day-labourers in the country, and the artisans in the towns, were everywhere oppressed and trampled down whichever way they turned. Suddenly, however, they also seemed to be seized with the consciousness of that national existence which now for the first time found expression in the English language, and the earliest rising of this order was almost simultaneous with the occurrence of the

Black Death of the year 1348-49, which pressed most heavily upon their class. Indeed, the pestilence nearly decimated this portion of the population, so that the numbers of the workmen became most sensibly diminished; while the wages for labour were, on the other hand, very considerably augmented. For many years the Government found full occupation in endeavouring to accommodate these relations by artificial enactments; but in all the statutes passed to regulate the price of provisions and the amount of wages, the privileged classes were unanimous in determining that they would not accede to the just demands of the lower orders, whom they evidently considered to be doomed to labour like beasts of burden, and looked upon as mere serfs, who must be subdued, and, if expedient, destroyed by increased severity.

But even then the suffering and oppressed working classes had begun to form themselves into associations, in the hope by this means of obtaining bread for themselves and their starving families. At first the lower clergy, who were connected by birth and associations with these classes, took upon themselves the office of organizers and leaders; and, although their motives were in the first instance undoubtedly good, they were by degrees more and more disposed to favour subversive tendencies. The House of Commons soon had its attention drawn to this movement, which they endeavoured summarily to put down wherever it had departed from its generally passive attitude, and proceeded to open resistance. Justice and compassion could not, however, be obtained by peaceful means for many of these unfortunate outcasts. The manner in which the poor people themselves arrived at this conclusion, while with a true

Germanic conservatism they still adhered to some noble principles, has been mournfully yet forcibly conveyed to us in the poem of "Pierce Plowman's Vision," a remarkable literary production of that day, which is said to have been composed about the year 1362, by an otherwise unknown priest named Robert Longland. According to this writer, all estates of the realm, but more especially the clergy and nobility, were tainted with internal corruption; the only exception being the poor country labourer, who was bound to the sod, where, with the sweat of his brow, he tilled the land for others, and had alone kept himself unspotted from the world. A deep religious feeling breathes through the remarkable verses, in which the dreamer recognises his ideal, the ploughman, personified as it were in the Redeemer. No less deep and thrilling is the tone in which the hypocrisy and hardheartedness of those who have brought about these miseries is described. There is, indeed, as yet, no thought of an insurrection; and the most that the writer ventures upon is to thunder forth his prophecies of the approaching destruction of priests and monks. A king, he says, will assuredly arise and bring with him redemption; and here, as in many other movements of the same kind, we find that the current of popular feeling inclines to unite with that of absolute monarchy. From this remarkable poem we learn how early religious and decidedly obscure, visionary, and almost utopian ideas mingled with the fierce waters of strife, which even then were threatening to burst through every obstruction, and devastate everything around.

And at length the fierce insurrection actually burst forth; for the heavy taxation, which pressed most severely

on the lowest classes, finally kindled the flame of rebellion. Furious demagogues belonging to the working classes, and fanatic communist priests, appeared at the head of the rabble, leading them on by enthusiastic watchwords and party-cries to the perpetration of every crime. The words of Pierce, the ploughman, passed from mouth to mouth; and the result was that, for a few days, the country and town mobs were masters of London and of the Tower; and that for a few days they revelled in the blood of prelates and nobles, ransacked the gold chests of the merchants, and plundered the wealthy nobles of their wine and plate. But a decisive catastrophe was at hand, bringing with it a sudden reaction. The proprietary and ruling classes quickly rallied from their panic; and, combining together, retracted the few concessions that had been made in the moment of extremest need; and ultimately the insurrection was decisively put down by the help of arms, and at the cost of much blood.

We are naturally led to inquire what was the connexion which, it is asserted, existed between this insurrection and the works and teaching of Wiclif; or what association can be traced between the sentiments that inspired John Ball's levelling distich—

> "When Adam delved and Eve span,
> Where was then the gentleman?"

and the earnest activity which Wiclif displayed in his teaching, and which always embraced the good of the monarchy, and was directed with a view to its maintenance? Far from there being any ground for assuming such an idea, it would be more easy, on the contrary, to

prove that his own sermons and those of his immediate followers were directly opposed to the tendencies of the popular orators. In fact, Wiclif desired to maintain the system of the State precisely as it then was, and he regarded the Church as a most dangerous opponent in consequence of the vast secular power to which the ecclesiastical institution had attained; while those who favoured the insurrection were desirous of doing away with lords and masters of every kind, whether ecclesiastical or secular, excepting, indeed, only the King, whom alone they wished to retain, whilst they had fixed upon the mendicant friars as the guardians of their souls; for these men, who were the irreconcilable enemies of Wiclif, had, from the beginning of the outbreak, made themselves indispensable to the great masses of the people. Wiclif's connexion with John of Gaunt is well known, and yet the Duke was one of the men against whom the rebels were most excited. His noble town residence, the Savoy Palace, in the Strand, and his castles at Leicester and Tutbury, were almost razed to the ground; while he himself was compelled for a time to take refuge in Scotland from the hatred of the populace; nor can the slightest harmony be traced between the dogmas of Wiclif and the wild communism of the peasants. The high clerical and monastic inquisitorial judges, who most assuredly never lost sight of Wiclif, neither then nor at any other time ventured to accuse him of having been the companion of Wat Tyler; although, in accordance with his usual practice, he seized the occasion to make known his own views, which were embodied in a tract on "Masters and Servants."

Wiclif in his day, as Luther did in 1525, fully

comprehended the excessive danger with which such an insurrection threatened his work, and these dangers now assumed a twofold character; for the Duke of Lancaster, who had been driven away from all influential connexion with public affairs, began to be frightened, and timidly withdrew from the great reformer, while he lacked the moral strength to attach himself with enthusiasm to the new doctrines. Then, moreover, the pious and noble archbishop, Simon Sudbury, who had been murdered in the insurrection, was at this time succeeded by the proud and imperious fanatic, William Courtnay, who became primate at a time when everything was in a state of transitional reaction, and who was well known as the determined antagonist of heretics, whom he had resolved to exterminate by sword and fire.

His first step was to cause the new doctrines to be examined and judged in accordance with the forms and usages of the Church; and then, without mercy, to punish to the utmost all who refused to recant their errors. Nor did he rest till he had brought this purpose into execution; for on the 17th of May, 1382, he convoked a solemn synod, which was summoned to meet in the priory of the Black Friars, London, and consisted of seven bishops, besides thirty-one bachelors of divinity and law, of which almost all were, without exception, members of the four mendicant orders—the Franciscans, Dominicans, Augustines, and Carmelites, and therefore most virulent opponents of Wiclif. The primate laid before them a list of twenty-four articles, which were somewhat irregularly drawn up, and which were not even all of them taken from the propositions of Wiclif. After three days' careful deliberation, the synod con-

demned ten of these articles as heretical, and the remainder as fallacious. During the sitting of the synod an earthquake was felt in London, and Wiclif ingeniously took advantage of the occurrence, exclaiming, in the midst of his confession of faith, "You accuse Christ and the saints in heaven of heresy; and verily the earth has responded in the place of God to the voice of man, as it did at the time of His passion."

The archbishop in the meanwhile had, on the strength of the last year's occurrences, applied to Parliament for authority to put down these dangerous men, whose teaching and preaching were sowing dissension among the people in every part of the country. On this occasion he gave the first description that we have of these renowned itinerant preachers, who had been trained in Wiclif's school. In a worn, coarse, russet-brown robe, which was, not without design, made after the pattern of those worn by the regular orders, barefooted, with staff in hand, these men go from county to county, and from town to town, preaching daily without having received the licence of their bishop. Not only churches and churchyards are selected by them for this purpose, but the market-places, the streets, and even the open fields are held good enough, provided there is a sufficient crowd collected to listen to their astute, wily and heretical sermons. Here we see the persecution turned directly against the most faithful followers of the great divine. The interests of the ecclesiastical and secular lords had been again united by the common panic, and the Upper House showed itself perfectly ready to pass the law proposed by the primate. This was the first time the Church had attempted to avail itself of the services

of the secular power to carry out its sentences of condemnation. The Commons, however, manifested their anti-clerical tendencies by refusing to pass the bill. The archbishop was, therefore, obliged to content himself with a royal ordinance, which thoroughly betrays the vacillating spirit in which the weak government of Richard II. was carried on; and on account of which the hierarchy, not without some show of reason, took vengeance by falling off from their allegiance, and taking part with his rival and successor. In this ordinance, which could not have the weight of a legal enactment, the prelates were permitted to arrest all heretical teachers and their adherents by the hands of the servants of the Church, while all officers holding secular places, and the laity generally, were called upon to afford them whatever aid they needed. At that period it was still impracticable to get a bill against heresy through Parliament.

Courtnay, nevertheless, was well satisfied with the concessions that had been made to him, and he lost no time in taking his own measures against the evils which he had resolved to put down. Threats and announcements of prosecutions were posted up throughout all the diocese, and in all the churches of his province. During the week of Whitsuntide, a solemn procession was held in London; after which a Carmelite friar ascended the pulpit by St. Paul's Cross, and defended in his sermon to the assembled people the orthodox doctrines of the Church against these scandalous heresies. The principal attack was, however, to be made against the University of Oxford, which Courtnay had long regarded as the centre of the entire movement. On the 28th of May, Peter Stokes, himself a Carmelite, received orders rom

the primate to publish the resolutions of the assembly at Blackfriars, in order that the University might be regulated by them, and forbid for the future such heresies from being preached or discussed in its churches and halls. But the extent to which the new doctrines had spread in the University is shown by the fact that the chancellor, Robert Rigge, made no secret of his adherence to the opinions of Wiclif, while he even authorized Nicholas of Hereford, one of the most zealous friends of the reformers, to preach the university sermons at St. Mary's. The archbishop, therefore, saw himself compelled to address an earnest appeal to the chancellor; and when this was found to be of no avail, he summoned him and Brightwell, a doctor of divinity, to appear before him in London, on the 12th of June. They were forced, after some delay, to obey this citation, to submit to ecclesiastical power, and to acknowledge the condemnation of the twenty-four propositions. Rigge was now sent back to Oxford with an open commission to proceed against Wiclif and four of his adherents, viz., Hereford, Philip Reppington, Dean of Leicester, where the new doctrines seem to have been fostered with special zeal, John Aston, and Lawrence Bedeman. They were to be deprived of all academical rights and privileges until they had cleared themselves from the heavy charges made against them. The chancellor himself, however, did not conceal his old sympathy for the reformers, as soon as he was beyond the jurisdiction of the inquisitorial court; and he forbade a bold monk, named Henry Crompe, from continuing the lectures in which he had been inveighing with bitterness against the Wiclifites, or Lollards, as they were called from this time forth. This

man would not, however, suffer himself to be quietly put down, but hastened to the archbishop, whom he induced not only to recall the chancellor's interdict by means of a royal decree, but also to confirm the last ecclesiastical ordinance, in which stringent measures were ordered to be taken without delay against these men and their adherents, while their tracts and other writings were to be confiscated, and they themselves ordered to leave the city within a week. This blow took effect, for even the university authorities were now compelled to submit.

On the 18th of the month Hereford, Reppington, and Aston appeared in the hall of Blackfriars Abbey, where Archbishop Courtnay himself presided over the court of inquisition. They made an obstinate and firm resistance, and gave vent to their opinions both by writing and by word of mouth during the different sittings. Their explanations in respect to the eucharist were not found satisfactory. On one occasion, Aston was so far carried away by his zealous convictions that, notwithstanding Courtnay's order that he should speak in Latin, on account of the laity who were present, he turned to the numerous assembly collected around him, and defended his opinions in an animated English address. All the scholastic arts that were expended for the purpose having failed to induce these men to recant, the sentence of excommunication was pronounced against them on the 13th of July, notwithstanding their appeal to Rome, and a notification of the fact was posted up on all the churches in town and country, and at the University of Oxford. A few months proved, indeed, that ecclesiastical censures had not yet lost their efficacy. The zeal of John Bokyngham, Bishop of Lincoln, whose

diocese had been specially affected by the new doctrines, seems to have contributed largely to this result. In October and November, Hereford, Reppington, Aston, and Bedeman, successively, gave in the required recantation, received absolution, and were reinstated in the offices which they had formerly held as parish priests and university teachers. We are not told how they reconciled their consciences to such a step, or how great was the sorrow which filled the mind of Wiclif when he saw the abject submission of these once brave champions of the faith. There is some significance, however, in the fact that some of them had benefited by Lancaster's intercession, and we know that Hereford returned at a subsequent period to his former opinions.

The clergy believed themselves almost certain of complete victory, when the commission, which had been appointed to judge Wiclif, and which in the meantime had been countermanded to Oxford, opened its sittings. He appeared before them on the 18th of November; for even his failing health had not hindered him from coming up from his living at Lutterworth. Although he was not yet old in years, he was, nevertheless, extremely feeble, and suffered severely from gout; his spirit, however, was still unbroken, and his faith never wavered. He did not look upon his cause as wholly lost; and he had only recently addressed a new appeal to his countrymen, a proof, considering the state of his health at the time, of his great facility for composition. This address appeared in the form of a petition to the king and parliament, which had now again met together. Taking his stand on the evidence of the Scriptures, he mainly treated of the four points

in which centred all his practical and theoretical premises, viz., the worthlessness and futility of the monastic vow; the power of the State to dispose of Church property; the right of withholding the tithes from the clergy when they were convicted of crime or misdemeanour; and, finally, the purified doctrine of the eucharist. This tract met with approval in the House of Commons, and contributed to throw out the bill against heretics, which had been proposed by the recent co-operation of the peers. It had also the effect of making the ecclesiastical court, before which the reformer was summoned, very careful to abstain from the discussion of questions that might bring it into conflict with the State, and it now required only that he should justify himself in regard to his opinions on transubstantiation. But this was ground on which no one would follow this bold inquirer, and the Duke of Lancaster, after he had in vain counselled Wiclif to give up his resistance, now even publicly withdrew from him. Weak and suffering, without human support, and trusting only in God's help, he yielded not a step in this battle for his faith. His own words completely give the lie to the old and recently revived assertion of his recantation, for he uttered not a syllable that could be construed in such a sense; and this is shown in the judgment of the court, which simply treats of his expulsion from the University. Nevertheless, the great moderation with which he was treated is very striking. He was judged, not in London, but at the University, of which he was one of the most distinguished members, and even without the presence of the archbishop; and the court did not venture to deprive

him of his benefice, or the cure of souls; nor was the sentence of excommunication pronounced against him. It is evident, therefore, that the nation and the university still required to be treated with a certain amount of consideration, and that Wiclif could not, at any rate in this life, be given over to the inquisition.

After these events, Wiclif withdrew to his living at Lutterworth, which had long been very dear to him; and where the pulpit in which he preached is still reverentially shown to strangers. As far as his feeble health permitted, he endeavoured to complete his work, by writing and teaching; and it was here, too, probably, that he composed his principal work, the "Trialogus," in which he expounded, in the ponderous scholastic style of his times, the principal points in his system of reformation. Latterly he was assisted, both in preaching and in the discharge of his other parochial duties, by his faithful scholar and companion in the faith, John Purvey, who had aided him in the translation of the Bible. When Pope Urban VI. summoned him to appear before him at Rome, he was able with truth and dignity to excuse himself on the ground that he was already on the brink of the grave; and, indeed, very soon afterwards, he was relieved by death from all further persecution from priests and monks. He closed his eyes in peace, on the last day of the year 1384, shortly after he had been attacked by apoplexy, while attending mass in his own church, after having experienced several premonitory symptoms of his fatal disease.

In the pictures and representations that have come down to us, he appears as an old, thin, and slenderly formed man, while in some he is represented as having

sunken features. He is dressed in the robe commonly worn by ecclesiastics at Oxford during that age, and carries a staff and book in his hands. In one portrait of him, which has only been recently discovered, his name has been carefully covered by the words, "Robert Langton;" and it is obvious that this must have been done by some friend and adherent, who wished by this device to save the picture during the period of persecution. From the testimony of all who came in contact with him, he must have possessed very remarkable powers of exhortation and persuasion; for, three and twenty years after his death, one of those who subsequently suffered martyrdom for adhering to his doctrines, declares that Wiclif was the first theologian of his age; while, in the year 1406, the University of Oxford gave expression to its admiration of the man by declaring, that both in word and deed he was a true champion of the faith, untainted by the leaven of heresy; and that he stood foremost and without a rival among all who had either taught or written on logic or philosophy, or on ethical and speculative theology. His knowledge, his talents and his piety secured to him the esteem and devotion of all classes, whether high or low. His relations to the courts of Edward III., Richard II. and John of Lancaster, as well as the enthusiasm and zeal with which Lord Latimer, and the knights Trussel, Clifford, Stury, Nevil, and Montague, took his part, sufficiently show the falsehood of the assertion that it was only the common people who adhered to his cause. Instead of this, a generation had passed away before the Wiclifite opinions were eradicated from among the nobles and the members of the university; while the

practical tenor of his teaching lingered covertly, but persistently, from that time forth, among different classes, although more especially, indeed, among the lowest ranks of the community.

No one will deny, however, that if we consider from a Protestant point of view the reformation aimed at by Wiclif, we shall find much to object to. He was himself fully sensible of the great proportion of error and weakness that clung to his system. But it must not be forgotten, that in the age in which he lived it was a matter of the first importance to cleanse the State from the corrupt secular pretensions of the Church. Nothing but the mode of thought peculiar to his day could have led him to the illogical assertion, borrowed from the principle of feudalism, that every earthly possession, like a dispensation of mercy from heaven, can be forfeited through sin, both by the layman and the priest. We can now see that he was deficient in scientific and critical knowledge, which might have aided him in his expositions of theology and philosophy, and more especially in his translation of the Bible. But we cannot reproach him for these deficiencies, and still less that he continued to his last days to attend mass; for he did not attack this hierarchical idolatry from the same point of view that was subsequently assumed by Luther. On one occasion he expressly stated, that his worship of the Host was conditional and spiritual, for the body of Christ dwelt in heaven. He never attempted to form a new communion; and his itinerant preachers were designed only to give new vigour to the inner being of the Church, and in no way to disturb its existing external traditionary system.

Notwithstanding all his short-comings, he must be regarded as the worthy precursor of the German Reformation, however much the limited and arbitrary tendency towards one special direction has led certain writers to deny his claims to this merit. We confidently hope that the Anglican Church, and more especially the University of Oxford, will carry out the purpose that has often been expressed, of publishing the many unprinted tracts and sermons of Wiclif, and thus erect the noblest monument that could be raised to his memory, by proving that his life and actions were truly those of a messenger sent by God himself as a witness to the faith. Let us not forget the testimony borne to the memory of the great Reformer by Milton, in his forcible and eloquent speech to the Parliament of England for the liberty of unlicensed printing; when, in the fervour of his Protestant patriotism, he exclaims, with almost mournful emotion: "And had it not been the obstinate perverseness of our prelates against the divine and admirable spirit of Wiclif, to suppress him as a schismatic and innovator, perhaps neither the Bohemian Huss and Jerome, no, nor the name of Luther, or of Calvin, had been ever known; the glory of reforming all our neighbours had been completely ours."

IX.

KING HENRY V. AND KING SIGISMUND.

THERE is something very significant in the fact, that Wiclif should have arisen among a people of Germanic origin, living near the narrow margin of Celtic population which in his time was regarded as the western boundary of the world, while Huss followed him in the remote east, where the University of Prague formed the connecting link between civilization and barbarism among a nation of Slavonic origin. The vast extent of Germany, from the midst of which Luther was destined in a future age to arise, still remained apparently unmoved in the centre of these disturbing influences. It afforded, however, many links of connexion which were not appreciable at other spots. Among these we may instance the remarkable fate of the imperial dynasty of Luxemburg. This house, which from its hereditary tendencies had been drawn within the sphere of French policy, naturally continued during the greater part of the fourteenth century to be at enmity with the Plantagenets, until the relations existing between Edward III. and Italy, and more especially the divided power of the popes, first brought this prince into connexion, within the transalpine territory, with the wretched schemes of King

Wenzeslaus. To this intercourse it would appear that the marriage of the young King Richard II. with Anne of Bohemia is due, which although it did not produce a new royal race, was momentous on account of the new ideas which it was the means of diffusing, and which were destined to agitate the entire world.

It is a matter of no little importance that these relations between both reigning houses were not severed even when each had experienced the remarkable vicissitudes that mark their several fates. Richard II. was dethroned for many reasons; among the least of which we can scarcely reckon the lukewarm assistance which he gave the Church against the heterodox movements of those days; while his brother-in-law, Wenzeslaus, not only lost the German kingly crown, but saw himself at the same time totally without support in Bohemia on the breaking out of the heretical movement among the Tchechs. The English dethroned monarch was succeeded by his cousin, Henry of Lancaster, and the Bohemian sovereign by his brother Sigismund, who became the next king of Rome. Both these newly-elected monarchs perceived that it would be to their special interest to secure the deeply irritated authorities of the ancient Church as their firm allies; while both gave the weight of their kingly power towards the extinction of heresy within their dominions. It is scarcely likely, however, that Henry could have forgotten, that his father, old John of Gaunt, had once been the personal friend and patron of Wiclif, and that he had stood by him to protect him at a time of great danger. Nor is it less improbable that Sigismund should have lost all sympathy for his brother, and that he should have retained no recollection of the

opinions which his shrewd father, Charles IV., the friend of Petrarch, had entertained towards Rome; or of the good-will which he had shown towards the pious preacher and Friar of Strasburg, Johann Tauler. The force of circumstances, and an insecure tenure of the throne to which each had unexpectedly attained, served, however, in both cases, to outweigh more important considerations.

Very different were the scenes and personal relations in which the Lancastrian and Luxemburg princes were placed, and scarcely less different were the natural dispositions of the two sovereigns. Sigismund, who had sprung from a race that was half French and half German, had been carried along with the singular destinies of his house. Neither as Margrave of Brandenburg, nor as imperial vicegerent in Poland, was he able to command the means and material resources necessary for the permanent maintenance of his authority; while his easy, careless disposition had led him, notwithstanding the many estimable qualities with which he had been gifted by nature, into fierce differences with his blood relations, and plunged him irretrievably into debt. His love of pleasure, his extreme susceptibility to female attractions, and his romantic adventures, early exercised a baneful influence on his moral principles. In addition to this, when he was king of Hungary, he was in some degree, perhaps to his own advantage, suddenly thrown in the midst of a mass of popular confusion, in which Germans, Slavonians, and Magyars were constantly brought into a state of political, ecclesiastical, and social antagonism, from which they were unable to develop clear and constitutional order

It was only the wish of averting the fearfully increasing danger with which the Turks were threatening Europe from the east, which was able for a moment to fuse together these antagonistic elements. Still more severe trials seemed to be impending over princes and people, for the followers of the Cross and the Crescent, which had for ages contended against one another in Western Asia, were turning the east of Europe into a field of strife. Sigismund had fought and suffered at Nicopolis as a true hero of the Cross; and when he ascended the throne of Charlemagne, he endeavoured to reconcile the contending powers; striving, like a second Barbarossa, to lead the united Christians of the West against the unbelievers of the East.

The Lancastrian prince, on the other hand, although he sprang from the Norman race of the Williams and Henrys, had, in fact, raised to the throne of his native land a new dynasty, which, while it was strongly influenced by the national interests of the people, was also the first which spoke the English tongue, or sympathised in the feelings of the English nation. With him, therefore, everything was made to bend to the maintenance of his government at home, which he endeavoured to strengthen by making skilful compromises with the popular feelings of the day, and proffering strong support to the Church. There were many causes of ferment remaining in the country as the result of the late forcible usurpation of the crown; but Henry perceived that he might easily open a channel for these feelings by directing them against the continent, and he therefore intentionally rekindled the old enmity against France. Henry IV. appears before us as the personal expositor

of this feeling, while his government presents itself to us as that of a crafty politician, who knows how to weigh accurately the means at his disposal. An uncommon degree of self-control was the chief thing required of him if he would maintain the exalted station to which he had raised himself. It was only very rarely, and at the beginning of his reign, that he was present himself in battle, or tried his own strength in the contest with his opponents; although he seems to have felt that he had a special vocation for the life of a crusader, and yearned for the glory of taking part in the struggle with the heathens. He had once even shared in the combat of the Teutonic Knights in Prussia, and in the expeditions of the Knights of St. John against Rhodes; and it is probably on one of these occasions that he first entered into relations of amity with Sigismund. He died deploring his inability to fulfil the vow he had made of going to Jerusalem.

His son, Henry V., was called upon to carry out his father's work on the grandest scale. In his younger days he had shown similar tendencies to those which were once manifested by his elder contemporary Sigismund. His life had been full of the most trying vicissitudes from his youth upwards, for while the Luxemburg prince had once been made captive by the Magyars, Henry had been imprisoned in Ireland; and while the former had once valiantly thrown himself into the midst of the hordes of the Osmans, Henry in his turn had distinguished himself in the struggle with Owen Glendower's Welsh followers; for he had in truth been compelled to win both the title and territories of Prince of Wales by his own personal valour and daring. It

cannot, however, be denied that he fell at this period of his life into evil companionship. An excess of buoyant genial vitality led him for a time to find pleasure in associations and pursuits which could not fail to leave some bad effects upon his character. Mournfully his father shook his heavy, sorrow-burdened head over his son's delinquencies; and amid his many other cares he was troubled to think that his first-born, who was endowed with such noble gifts, and to whom an undisturbed succession seemed now assured, might perchance misrule the land after he was gone. But great was the change exhibited by the young Prince on his accession to the throne! All the blemishes and taints which might still have clung to him from those unruly days of his youth were cast aside with a light but manly touch; and resolute and strong in the full maturity of his powers, he at once grasped the sceptre and the sword of state with a firm hand; showing on his first accession to the throne that no one had better understood the tendencies of his father's rule than himself; while his head and hand were alike ready to execute all that his vigorous intellect was capable of planning. From this time forth, Henry lived and laboured only in the performance of the great duties of his rule. All his energy seemed indeed to be directed with unflinching accuracy in certain definite directions; and everywhere men recognised in his measures the tangible results of a sound and powerful intellect. The condition of his government and kingdom was the very opposite of that into which Germany and the neighbouring Slavonic nations were rapidly sinking, and of which the weak king Sigismund was the apt personal representative.

If we examine the most essential and important directions followed by English policy at the beginning of the fifteenth century, we can scarcely overlook the extent to which it was implicated with European politics. The change of dynasty had re-kindled the old animosity towards the great neighbouring kingdom of France, which had been almost extinguished under Richard II.; while at the same time heavy trials and difficulties were undermining the throne and government of the French royal house. Henry, who had gathered together new links of alliance both in the Romanized as well as the Germanic kingdoms of the West, and had formed new alliances, which were destined, as he hoped, to give to his dynasty a supreme place among the rulers of the world, never for a moment lost sight of the factions by which France was being dismembered; and while both parties turned to him, and both received his promises of support, they were themselves opening to him a path towards the much coveted throne of the Valois. The old pretensions of Edward III. were again revived in their fullest force, and were destined within a few years to acquire the most remarkable validity. That which neither Crecy nor Poitiers had been able to effect, Henry achieved for himself by his incomparable victory at Agincourt. It was scarcely to be doubted that with his Anglo-Burgundian army he would succeed in subjecting the greater portion of France to his sway; but an achievement of this kind, the object of which was to fuse into one the destinies of two nations, produced no less excitement in the west of Europe, than the advance of the Turks had done in the east.

Another, and most certainly an equally important, agent in the excitement which was then shaking the whole of Europe to its very foundation, was the influence of the Church. The Lancastrian dynasty secured stability for their throne by upholding the Romish dogmas against all heretical attacks, and maintaining the national clergy in all their long-established rights, and thus converted this order of the community into its most staunch allies. It is easy step by step to follow this contest.

The politico-religious movement excited by Wiclif had found the most zealous supporters in his successors, the Lollards, although the original purity of his motives and objects soon began to disappear among his followers. The fall of Richard in no way disheartened the sect, for notwithstanding every form of persecution, the itinerant preachers persevered in their ardent and enthusiastic course of action; while persons belonging to the higher classes still adhered to them, and their followers among the lower grades of society constantly increased in number. Any one who at that day had been gifted with an unprejudiced judgment in regard to matters of faith, could not possibly have been blind to the necessity and the passionate desire evinced by the English nation for a purer and more evangelical form of doctrine. But at the same time, the unfavourable elements, which like weeds continued to grow with an ever-increasing luxuriance, were equally apparent; while the revolution, by which the Lancastrians raised themselves to the throne, had given them redoubled vigour. In the attempts that were made in favour of the defeated party, Lollard influences soon became conspicuous; while the

vague reports current that the murdered Richard was still alive, found eager and ready credence among the enemies of the Church. The diffusion of those incentives to further rebellions and the heretical doctrines of the adherents of Wiclif were, however, now speedily condemned in one and the same statute; and the more closely the anti-Catholic tendencies became identified with political conspiracy, the more energetic and complete were the measures taken by the government. Even during the reign of Henry IV. the Crown had been able to keep in check the religious opposition at home, without reference to the continent, and had successfully erected the standard of orthodoxy in its former high place. One of the first declarations of that prince had been, that he would uphold not only the ancient constitutional privileges of the Church, but also the doctrines established by the fathers of the Church and by the doctors of the schools. By such stringent measures as these he effected an union between the different parts of the legislature and state, which could not have been attained under Richard, for now the crown, with the clergy and barons conjoined, passed a fundamental law against heresy, by which ecclesiastics who had relapsed after their recantation, could be punished, and their heretical writings judged by the episcopal tribunals, which, in case they were committed, were to give them over to the secular authorities for further punishment and final judgment. On the 26th of February, 1400, the first fires were lighted at Smithfield, when William Sawtree, a Wiclifite pastor, was burnt. This was the beginning of a whole century of bloody persecution, the extent of which we cannot fully realize,

although many individual cases are well known to us. The object aimed at was, however, manifestly not attained, as the reformation of the sixteenth century amply proves. Although the strength of the English nation was long doomed to strive against such severity on the part of the inquisitorial authorities, the unbending spirit of the German character was shown in their firm rejection of opinions of which they did not approve. The Lollards even did not for a long time regard their cause as wholly lost. The more severe the oppression with which they were threatened, the more earnest grew their preachers, and the more excited and zealous were their adherents. One is also surprised to find how long the old spirit of reformation, which had been transmitted through so many national channels to the University of Oxford, survived the repressive measures adopted for its annihilation; but the influence of Wiclif continued even after his death to exert a powerful and beneficent effect on the hearts of his countrymen. Courtnay's successor, Archbishop Arundel, "that tower of the orthodox faith," as his friends called him, directed his attention from an early period to this university, which seemed to him in a pitiable condition, and which, as he expressed it, "had once been a full and juicy vine, but now produced only sour grapes." Here Wiclif's memory had recently been exalted to the skies in a university decree, and here some few of his adherents might be found as late as the middle of the century. At Arundel's instigation, the Inquisition was converted into a permanent court in the year 1409, when the university authorities were enjoined, under the threat of excommunication, to visit every month each

individual college and hall, and to expel all the teachers or scholars whose opinions had laid them open to the suspicions of heresy. Three years later, however, the academical authorities entreated the primate to make a personal visitation of the colleges and halls; while they met his zeal half way by extracting hundreds of passages from the writings of the reformer, which they characterized as unorthodox. These measures were quite in harmony with the ecclesiastical censure that was now levelled at all Wiclifite works generally. It was decreed that only such works as had been approved of by the proper authorities, were to be transmitted to booksellers for copying and distribution; while all translations into English, either of the Biblical text or of the writings of the Fathers, were strictly prohibited. Thus, the bar which had once been removed was again applied; but we see how stringent were the measures required to meet the enemy with vigorous opposition at this single point.

Almost more important, however, was the position which was still maintained by the Commons, who were entrusted with the principal participation in the enactment of the laws. The penal statute against the Lollards had not passed into a law of the land without a strong protest on their part. An important section of the representatives both of the civic and rural population, still maintained certain dangerous principles, which they looked upon as perfectly practical, and which had already, many years before, been promulgated by the sectarians. According to these views, nothing could be more expedient, since all worldly corruption appeared to have taken root among the over-

wealthy clergy, than to incorporate the property of the Church with that of the State, by which means the inadequate resources of the financial and administrative departments would be relieved of some of their excessive pressure, and the purses of the taxpayers less heavily drained. In the year 1404, to the intense indignation of the Archbishop of Canterbury, some of the knights of the shires seemed disposed to lay hands on the property of the clergy; and in 1410, the members of the Lower House, when irritated by the exactions of the Crown, surprised the other portions of the legislative body by a remarkable motion, which aimed at nothing less than a secularization on a large scale, which was conceived very much in the same spirit as that of the succeeding century. They proposed, in real earnestness, to take a sufficient sum from the revenues of the prelates and the monastic institutions to bring into the field fifteen earls, fifteen hundred knights, and six thousand squires, in addition to which the Church was to supply the funds necessary to erect a hundred hospitals for the poor—propositions which were so nearly communistic in their nature, that they lead us to suspect some connexion between the doctrines of Wiclif and the tendencies of the year 1381. The extreme sympathy evinced by this parliament towards the views of the Lollards, is clearly manifested by the series of motions and petitions brought under notice during the session. The Commons demanded that all persons suspected of a relapse to heresy should be brought before the secular judges, and not be subjected to the ecclesiastical courts; and that the penal statute of the year 1401 should be modified. This gave rise to a violent conflict with the King and the Upper

House, in which the Commons were finally compelled to submit by withdrawing their petition. This appears, moreover, to have been the turning point of the affair in parliament, for, from henceforth, the impression evidently gained ground among other classes as well as among the clergy and nobility, that theological reform was connected with tendencies inimical to the possession of property; while, moreover, the Commons began to perceive that the spoliation of the Church would only be the prelude to an overthrow of the other estates of the realm. Thus, therefore, a rupture was avoided between the different sections of the legislature, and Henry IV. had the satisfaction of finding that he could govern his kingdom strictly in harmony with the wishes of parliament, while, at the same time, he redeemed his pledge to the Church of upholding the cause of orthodoxy. Thus supported, his son entered upon the prosecution of his acknowledged purpose of thoroughly eradicating heresy, against the adherents of which an act of outlawry had been passed.

Even when still Prince of Wales, he had manifested in the midst of his mad pranks an almost fanatical hatred against heretics. He appears in the year 1406 to have brought about a combination of the Lords and Prelates, who, in their turn, took upon themselves the task of gaining over the Commons, with the view of their proceeding conjointly against the adherents of the perfidious Richard and the Lollards. When, in the year 1410, a miserable wretch, named Badby, a smith by trade, was to be burnt at Smithfield, and had just been secured within the tun, the Prince of Wales stepped forth from the crowd. It is difficult to understand

why he came, but certain it is that he began to argue with the poor creature, who could not be induced to renounce his belief in Wiclif's doctrine of the sacrament. Perhaps the Prince hoped by converting him to the doctrine of transubstantiation to rescue him from the flames, and thus acquire merit to himself. But, as all was to no purpose, the faggots piled up round the tun were kindled, and the torture of the victim began. As his cries and lamentations fell upon the ear of those who stood around, Henry commanded the executioners to pause, and he once more attempted to accomplish the work of conversion; but the faith of Badby was stronger than his love of life, if it had to be saved under such conditions, and the flames soon destroyed their miserable victim. Praise of the Prince was on the lips of all who adhered to the side of the priestly order; and, in the ardour of his youthful enthusiasm, it is probable that the impression which the heroism of the martyr might have made upon his heart was soon effaced.

When, on Henry's accession to power, another insurrectionary movement broke out among the Lollards, he did not hesitate to aim a blow which fell in the first instance upon a man who had been personally dear to him. The knight, Sir John Oldcastle, who, as the husband of a peeress, also bore the title of Lord Cobham, had shortly before done important service to the crown in Wales and in France, and had for several years sat in the Upper House. It would appear that Wiclif's writings had suddenly made a deep impression on his mind, and he openly confessed that his eyes had for the first time been opened to his own sinfulness. He now favoured the new doctrines whenever and in whatever

manner he could; and at his house in Kent the Bible was read in English, and sermons were preached in accordance with the prohibited manner, while many a poor itinerant preacher, who had been hunted from village to village, found a secure place of refuge under his roof. Oldcastle seems even to have appealed to his services and his friendly relations with the Prince of Wales as a ground for effecting a better understanding between the King and the Lollard party, or, at all events, for preparing a milder fate for his brethren in the faith. Henry, however, gave evidence of his dissatisfaction with him, at the coronation, although he allowed some months to pass before he made up his mind what measures should be taken against his old friend. He first tried the effect of gentle persuasion; for, once at Kennington, and once at Windsor Castle, he had a private interview with the knight, who demeaned himself humbly and respectfully, although he adhered resolutely to his convictions. The King, on this, resigned the matter into the hands of the Archbishop, who had long thirsted for a victim for the inquisition. The remarkable suit that now arose showed how deeply the evangelical tendencies of this first English Reformation had sunk into the hearts of the nation, and how little all the restored power of the clergy had as yet prevailed against it. Oldcastle neither yielded to the representations of the King, nor did he retract in any particular in his defence before the court; and he quietly waited in the Tower the termination of the fifty days' grace allowed by the statute, after which it was customary either to give the accused a last opportunity of recanting, or else to commit him over to

the torture of the stake. At the end of this period, no one knows how, Oldcastle escaped across the walls and moat of his prison, and made his way in safety to Wales.

But soon after this event, in the early part of the year 1414, the authorities struck their long meditated blow. The Lollards of the capital who had long been in a state of intense excitement, were now incited to treasonable actions by the fate of their distinguished brother in the faith, and, perhaps, even by his encouragement and aid. Crowded meetings were held every night, at which the audience not only listened to the discourses of their highly honoured preachers, but, as the government authorities asserted that they had grounds for knowing, also deliberated on the downfall of the Lancastrian dynasty. Henry himself had long been convinced that heresy went hand in hand with hatred to his house, and it is therefore scarcely a matter of wonder that he should have placed himself at the head of the armed force, which on the night of the 7th of January, arrested in St. Giles' Fields, a large body of Lollards, who had met there in secret, and who may possibly have entertained similar views to those which were held by the peasants in Richard II.'s time. Now, at all events, the power of the state was wielded by a very different hand, for Henry V. had made it the first duty of his government to crush all internal dissensions in the realm, in order that he might be the better able to prosecute his plans on the continent. His severe measures against this mob were speedily crowned with success, and resulted in the capture of nine and thirty of those more especially implicated in the movement, and who were

principally aimed at in the attack of the royal party. A few priests and nobles were still to be found among their number, but a short and summary trial before the ecclesiastical authorities sufficed to include all under one and the same sentence of condemnation; and on the 24th of January, all the insurgents that had been taken perished either on the gallows or at the stake. A new statute which was hereupon adopted without dissent, gave additional force to the previous enactments of this penal act, and decreed that whoever was convicted of heresy was henceforth to forfeit all his worldly goods in the same manner as those guilty of high treason; while the further diffusion of heretical literature was to be finally stopped by the confiscation of the property of all copyists and sellers, who still continued clandestinely to prosecute their business, which it is evident was by no means unremunerative. A few years later, Sir John Oldcastle was seized in his Welsh place of concealment, and brought to London, where he was tried upon the old charge, and burnt at St. Giles'. It had been impossible to prove that he was implicated in any treasonable connexion with the recent incursions of the Scotch; and equally impossible to make him swerve from his faith; but his condemnation and death aided the stern Lancastrian Prince in successfully restoring external orthodoxy in his country; and driving back the anti-papistical tendencies, which had formerly been exhibited by the higher classes, into the lower and hidden grades of the population. And now Henry was enabled to turn his attention prominently and exclusively to conquest, and to the consideration of the great questions of European policy.

Who shall say, however, that both these objects were

not closely connected with the uprooting of heresy? The campaigns in France drew a number of unruly spirits from the country, and coincident with that circumstance, we find now for the first time that knights and burghers were alike agreed in approving of the plans of the higher ranks in regard to the unconditional protection that was to be awarded to the Church. Henry's European policy connected him with the Council of Constance, whose purposes and measures he maintained and promoted with especial zeal. It had become a vital question with the sovereigns of western Europe to put down the schism which had even led to a triple partition of the papal dignity, and princes were now as much alive as the people to the urgent necessity of regenerating the Church, both in regard to its head and members; while the clergy even showed a decided tendency to change the government of their powerful hierarchical institution from a monarchical into an aristocratic form of administration. This scheme was, however, intended to embrace the examination and final condemnation of all the errors and heresies that had shot up like mushrooms during the preceding century. The Council of Constance was an assembly met together essentially for ecclesiastical purposes, but it was very nearly as much a political congress for the whole of the West. It was not without a special object that choice was made of a considerable city within the Holy Roman Empire, for it was of the greatest importance to oppose the endeavours and plans of the Italian prelates, whose purpose had recently been made known at Pisa, to be that of ruling the world—at any rate spiritually—by the help of the Pope. King Sigismund had, indeed, the special merit of bring-

ing about the meeting of such a council as this, notwithstanding the many contending interests and wishes by which it was opposed. Circumstances had made him as it were the protector and bailiff of an ecclesiastical court, which was the highest in Christendom, since it was the tribunal on which devolved the task of passing sentence alike upon popes and heretics, and of re-establishing peace by its intervention, wherever it had been disturbed. Sigismund, moreover, formed the connecting link that held together the thread of those dynastic and spiritual combinations, which had so long existed between the English and the natives of Eastern Germany.

It is a universally known fact, that in consequence of Anne's marriage with Richard, many Bohemians, anxious for knowledge, had for the first time begun to resort to Oxford, for the purpose of studying there. They found the minds of men as much excited in the British island as they were in their own home, where disputes had then arisen with the monks, and earnest wishes were entertained for the removal of the restrictions which impeded freedom of belief. A teacher like Wiclif they did not, however, as yet possess. Is it then a wonder that ardent spirits, such as the knight Jerome of Prague, Nicholas Faulfisch, and many others, should have been penetrated and impressed by the force and purity of the English movement, and that even before Wiclif's death, his most important works should have been known at the university of Prague? There were no doubt many Bohemians who returned to their homes bearing with them precious relics,—such, for instance, as a piece of the stone that covered Wiclif's grave at Lutterworth—and we find in the early part of the fifteenth century, and even much

later, many traces of the lives and actions of English Lollards at Prague. Two of these men, who were forbidden by the academical authorities from teaching and lecturing, avenged themselves by the execution of two frescoes in their house, on one of which was represented Our Saviour entering Jerusalem, meekly riding upon an ass; while the other exhibited a gay procession, composed of the pope and cardinals proudly mounted upon noble chargers.

This connexion powerfully accelerated the progress of the reformation that had been aimed at by Huss; and which, although it was supported by less learning, was more popular than that of Wiclif, on whose writings it was, however, based in theory. Unrestricted preaching was in the meantime continued in Bohemia, where it boldly maintained its ground, notwithstanding all the interdicts that were directed against it. The national element likewise contributed its part, although in these respects it was in direct opposition to the feelings of the German part of the population, which now greatly exceeded the original race on which it had been ingrafted. In the year 1409 the Tchechs seized upon the University, and the Germans were obliged to retreat to Leipsic. Amongst the orthodox prelates difference of race exerted no influence, although the question was again revived by the position which King Wenzeslaus and his brother Sigismund had assumed towards those of the new faith. Wiclifite writings and works were never earnestly interdicted by them, notwithstanding the decrees of the pope and clergy, and they even took Huss and his followers under their protection at the decisive moment. The work of reformation, therefore, became much more

thoroughly a popular movement in Bohemia than it had ever been in England, and it thus coincided with the turbulent conditions which had for a long time prevailed in the country. The royal authority was nearly extinguished at the moment when Sigismund brought about the meeting of the great council, chiefly with the view of saving the Crown and Church of Bohemia. It must not, however, be forgotten that he had taken his own views independently of party spirit, as far, at least, as his somewhat shallow perceptions permitted, for he by no means sanctioned the violent demonstrations of the prelates and doctors of Prague, while, on the other hand, he had used his friendly influence with Huss to induce him to appear in person before the great council. He probably hoped that this enthusiastic man would be able to prove the purity of his doctrines before the assembly, and without any ulterior object pledged him his royal word by giving him a safe-conduct signed by his own hand.

It is well known how, in the month of November, 1414, the council opened its sittings amid a crowd of high prelates, learned doctors, monks, princes, noblemen, and soldiers. Its first act was to decide, among many conflicting interests, upon the order in which the various questions and matters of business were to be discussed; for while Pope John XXIII. wished to strengthen his very equivocal position by beginning with the questions relating to the Wiclifite and Hussite dogmas, the majority of the prelates, together with the secular authorities, demanded that the dissensions of the Church, and some decided measures for ecclesiastical reform, should be the first subjects brought under discussion. John had vainly endeavoured in some degree to make himself

equal to his two papal rivals, but the resolution to vote by nations, and not individually, made his deposition almost a matter of certainty. It is worthy of notice, that among the four national groups the English were recognised as a special nation. They appear to have voted with the Germans in regard to all the main questions under consideration. The first act of the council, mainly instigated by the pope, it must be admitted, was to cause Huss to be thrown into the prison of the Dominicans, notwithstanding his safe-conduct. His countrymen, who had accompanied him, were beside themselves with agitation and trouble, but they could do nothing to avert the evil. Even the just anger of Sigismund was speedily forgotten, when amid all the pomp and pageantry in which he delighted, he made his first entry into Constance at Christmas, and flattered and dazzled by the high position that had been accorded to him, suffered himself to be made use of by others, instead of adopting any independent course of action, based on his own convictions. How happy did he feel when, clad in the imperial mantle and wearing his crown on his head, he availed himself of all the traditional spiritual rights of his dignity, serving before the pope at high mass as a deacon, while he chaunted with sonorous voice the verse, "And it came to pass in those days that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus." He certainly soon afterwards contributed very materially towards forcing John XXIII. to abdicate, but when the humbled pope escaped under the protection of the Duke of Austria, he made no opposition to the fathers of the council who wished to have Huss taken from his keeping and given over to a far worse captivity under the

Bishop of Constance. While, in the course of time, his sincere endeavours to aid in bringing the schism of the Church to an end were destined to be crowned with success, he was soon placed under the painful necessity of sacrificing the man, whose life he had taken under his protection. It is assuredly not too much to conjecture that all those who had gone hand in hand with the King of Rome, in regard to the other questions, should now have used their utmost endeavours to induce him to make this important concession to the council. In the foremost ranks were undoubtedly the English, who were numerously represented by a large body of prelates and doctors from Oxford and Cambridge. Henry V. had designedly selected as the advocates of the Anglican Church the Bishops of Bath, Salisbury, and St. David's, with whom was associated, in the capacity of a secular plenipotentiary, Richard, Earl of Warwick, who was alike distinguished in war and diplomacy; for the king hoped that by the appointment of such a deputation his country might take an important share in the deliberations and decisions of this European conclave for the eradication of heresy. The Lollards had been prevented from securing any mode of representation for their doctrines at this great assembly; nor do we hear, on the part of the English, one word in favour of the writings of Wiclif, which were made the subject of repeated discussion. The English, on the contrary, who contributed to the best of their power to bring about the abdication of the worthless John XXIII., now required with the rest of the members that judgment should be declared in regard to the imprisoned heretic; while under the idea of a reformation of the Church, which was to include

both its head and members, they understood, first and above all, the restoration of the ancient orthodoxy. Sigismund rapidly came to the same conclusion, more especially as the Bohemian prelates had endeavoured with elaborate sophistry to persuade him that there had been no violation of the safe-conduct, as it had not come to the hands of Huss till after his captivity; and that in consequence of his having failed to obey the summons by which he had been called to Rome, he had long since fallen under the ban of excommunication. After this, the long but thoroughly prejudiced trial could naturally have no other termination than the condemnation of the accused, and of all the doctrines—but especially those of the divine, John Wiclif—on which his arguments were based. We will not enter into the particulars of the proceedings, as we have only here to speak of the unjust treatment which the martyr met with from the king. After the third and last sitting, Sigismund stepped forth among a number of cardinals and bishops, and declared that each one of the articles under discussion was sufficient to convict the heretic; but he recommended that even if Huss should recant, he should not be allowed to return to Bohemia, but rather that the branches as well as the trunk should be lopped off within the Bohemian dominions, and that Jerome, who had also lately been entrapped, should be destroyed at the same time. A few of their countrymen, who were friendly to both the reformers, had accidentally been unnoticed auditors of this conversation, and in the sequel the king was made to pay dearly for his words; for the Bohemians, in their insurrection, did not forget, that instead of interceding for the man to whom he had

given his royal word, he had incited his enemies to his destruction. Huss, although he had been thus cruelly undeceived, made no recantation, and was consequently condemned; and when, after the reading of the sentence, he once more appealed to his safe-conduct, a deep blush was observed to spread over Sigismund's face. The sentence which condemned Huss and Jerome to the flames was indeed inevitable, if the task which the council had taken upon itself were to be performed; but it destroyed a great part of the merit which the King of Rome would otherwise have earned for himself. The loss of Bohemia during the war of the Hussites, and the miserable position of the German empire, are sufficient proof that the government of Sigismund was not strengthened by his conduct at the Great Council of Constance.

But he no longer listened to the voice of conscience; and now bent himself with increased zeal to accomplish the many other charges with which the fathers of the assembly had honoured him. In the first place, it was desirable, after two of the contending popes had been compelled to renounce their rule, to induce the old and obstinate Benedict XIII., who had hitherto found support in the kingdom of Spain, to do the same. Sigismund was to effect the accession of Arragon and Castile to the council, together with the abdication of their pope. There was still a last faint glimmer of imperial authority around Sigismund, when the representatives of Western Christendom solemnly invested him in the cathedral church of Constance with this great dignity, and pledged themselves to celebrate high mass, and to perform processions for his well-being every Sunday during his absence. Here, then, began an episode in the

adventurous life of this prince, which was in the highest degree strange and romantic. An expedition of this kind was most thoroughly in accordance with Sigismund's taste, for he longed to visit new lands and new courts, and to see gallant knights and fair dames to whom he had hitherto been a stranger; he flattered himself that he should shine before foreigners in all his knightly accomplishments, while he might also, perhaps, enlist volunteers for the crusade against the Turks, and thus relieve the pitiable condition of his principalities in the south-east of Germany. Even a visit to Paris and London did not appear beyond the bounds of possibility. In order, however, to be able to appear in a manner that was in some degree in accordance with his high dignity, he needed considerable advances of money, which it was not very easy for him to obtain, considering that he had been labouring under pecuniary difficulties all his life. It was at this period that he resigned to the astute and wealthy Burgrave of Nuremberg, Frederick of Hohenzollern, who hath long been his creditor, the Margravate and Electorate of Brandenburg, in return for fresh supplies of money; while he pledged to the Swiss, on behalf of the empire, all the places which had lately been wrested from the Duke of Austria. It was only by these means that he could hope to be able to maintain the motley retinue of 4,000 men who followed him, among whom were a number of foreign magnates and prelates. Thus attended, he passed through Savoy in the summer of 1415, and through Provence to Narbonne and Perpignan. But weeks and months were frittered away in fruitless negotiations, for the self-willed obstinacy of the old Pope Benedict, who persisted

in maintaining the pontifical title, although unsupported by any adherents, was not to be moved. Sigismund's position among the foreign Catalans now began to be extremely unpleasant, and there was even a mutiny among his own people, while the young Count of Wurtemberg withdrew without leave, and betook himself homewards, attended by three hundred horsemen. In the following December, Arragon, Castile, and Navarre gave in their adherence to the Council of Constance, and some months later Portugal and Scotland followed their example.

Thus, then, Sigismund had, at all events, achieved a portion of that which he had attempted, but instead of returning and hastening the proceedings of the council by his presence, he betook himself, about Christmas time, leisurely to Avignon, where he enjoyed himself with jousting and dancing, while he freely accepted of the hospitality and presents of the priests and burghers of the town. He seemed, indeed, much more at his ease in foreign parts than in his own home, although, perhaps, he scarcely played a better part on these occasions than those Palæologi, who from time to time came from Constantinople seeking aid at the courts of Western Christendom. At this juncture occurred the great defeat which the French had recently experienced at Agincourt at the hands of Henry V. of England. Even before this event Sigismund had offered his services and mediation between the contending parties, both in his own name and in that of the Council of Constance; but the ambassadors, who had been sent by him into the English camp, were stopped on their way by the haughty French. What if he should now

succeed in executing the sacred duty of acting as a mediator in this struggle which was shaking Western Europe to its very centre? He had gone up the Rhone as far as Lyons on this mission, when he was met half way by the emissaries of the French government, who came to implore his intervention, and to promise him free living and royal entertainment during his stay in the country, which, considering his circumstances at the time, must have been a most welcome offer. Sigismund made his entry into Paris on the 1st of March, 1416, and alighted at the palace of the Louvre, where he and his eight hundred mounted attendants were received with state, and entertained as well as the existing condition of the monarchy allowed. He must, however, have been painfully impressed with the unstable character of the ancient relations between the houses of Luxemburg and Valois, and he was, moreover, very ill-fitted to counsel the best means of allaying the fierce flames of discord and faction with which France was devastated, and by which even the royal family had been divided. Count Bernard D'Armagnac, the constable of France and the leader of the Orleans party, who, in his bitter anger and mortification at the late severe defeat, would not hear of a peace with the English, now turned his back on the capital in order not to meet the lately arrived guest. Sigismund, however, enjoyed himself right pleasantly for four weeks; and from all appearances, we may judge that he adapted himself very readily to the Parisian mode of life, which, even in that age, was brilliant and luxurious. He, at all events, had no scruples in giving a sumptuous entertainment to a hundred and twenty ladies of Paris, to each of whom he presented a ring.

Another fancy in which he indulged was considered by the French to be somewhat less harmless. It would appear that the respect and marks of honour which were shown to him in the midst of the terrible anarchy of the kingdom, were not wholly without a tinge of deference for his imperial dignity. Thus on one occasion, when he was present at a sitting of the Parliament of Paris, he was permitted to take his place on the throne. In the business under discussion, to which the royal guest listened with undivided attention, a petitioner was dismissed without obtaining satisfaction, because he was not a knight, and therefore not equal in rank to his adversary. On this Sigismund arose, drew his sword, and conferred on him the accolade. This emanation of imperial power in a foreign country deeply offended the French, and the Orleans party adroitly availed themselves of the occasion to their own advantage. The King of the Romans could not fail to perceive that it would not be an easy matter for him to cement a peace under existing circumstances, and he therefore decided upon accepting the invitation of the King of England, who, with a keen political foresight, was disposed, from more than one motive, to desire a personal interview with a prince who showed so decided a taste for wandering about the world. Henry was naturally anxious to enter into more definite arrangements regarding the suppression of all heretical doctrines, than any which were likely to be brought about by the Council of Constance; while it was especially important to him to remove from all contact with French influences the prince who had come forward as a mediator, invested with the full powers of the empire and the Church, and

by drawing him to his own side, to render him harmless in regard, at least, to his own designs upon France. Henry kept this object firmly and clearly in view; and we will now proceed to consider how far he attained it by the help of the memorable conference which took place between him and the German monarch, and which, in several other respects, is not unworthy of being more fully considered by the help of the various particulars which have come down to us regarding it.

In the latter part of April the royal traveller and his retinue passed through St. Denis, Beauvais, and Amiens, towards the coast, on the road to which the King found that at some places—for instance, at Abbéville, Montreuil, and Boulogne—the burghers were not very well disposed towards him. It is not very clear whether political grounds, or any undue assumption on the part of the Emperor, gave the first incentive to this feeling, or whether it was merely called forth by the haughtiness of some of the foreign horsemen; but, at all events, a bad feeling obviously existed between the head of the German nation and the French people. Such being the case, Sigismund was naturally well pleased to enter, on the 27th, upon the English territory at Calais, while he was still better satisfied to think that the interview between himself and Henry was not to be held there but in England.

Henry wisely thought that it would be best that his visitor, who was most susceptible to all outward manifestations of pomp, should see the splendour and power of his kingdom, and receive from him those honours which, however little meaning or significance they retained, were still awarded to the successors of Charle-

magne. It was also said that the English nation was looking forward with anxious hope to this distinguished visit. The King, attended by his imperial retinue, which had been again augmented to about a thousand horse, among whom were several German and Italian princes of the empire, and some Hungarian and Polish noblemen, conspicuous by their oriental style of dress, was respectfully met and escorted by all the knights assembled at Calais. At their head rode the Earl of Warwick, whom Sigismund must have known at Constance, and two knights, scarcely less distinguished in the field, viz., the Lord Talbot and Sir Walter Hungerford. The Cinque Ports of Kent and of the Thames were required to send forth their numerous fleet, which was equipped for warlike service, to convey the guests across the channel, and it would appear that some three hundred sail were despatched to receive them. Sigismund embarked on the 30th at noon, and made the passage to Dover, with a favourable wind, in five hours; whilst a portion of his attendants, who did not leave till the following day, were tossed about on a rough sea for two days and nights.

The landing of Sigismund, who was the first King of the Romans that had set his foot on British ground, was regulated in accordance with a special programme, and was accompanied with elaborate ceremony; for the Lancastrian prince was fond of displaying his power with all the pomp he could command. It was here that a strange scene is said to have been enacted; for it is recorded that, before the guest could leave the ship, the Duke of Gloucester rode forward with a drawn sword in his hand, and demanded of him

solemnly to promise, before he set his foot on English ground, not to perform any act of imperial sovereignty during his presence in the kingdom, such as he had lately exhibited in Paris. It was not till this promise had been given that he was permitted to land below Dover Castle, where all the knights of the neighbouring shires—among whom there were many who could tell of the glorious day of Agincourt—were ranged in close ranks on horseback, ready to give their knightly greeting to the hero of Nicopolis. Their road led them through Canterbury, where, like so many other distinguished pilgrims of that age, the Germans did not fail to offer up their prayers at the grave of the national saint, where they admired the golden and gem-studded shrine that enclosed his remains, and then went on their way to Rochester, where they were met by the Duke of Bedford, and thence to Dartford, at which place the Duke of Clarence, another of the King's brothers, welcomed them in Henry's name. At length, when they reached Blackheath, and the spires of London were already in sight, the Lord Mayor and the city authorities appeared on horseback, clothed with that excess of finery in which they had always delighted, accompanied, we can scarcely doubt, by the master and members of the German Hanseatic Guild, happy in the joyous feeling of being permitted to wait upon the sovereign lord of their native land. Their welcome was probably hearty enough, but time pressed; for, as they approached the gates of Southwark, King Henry himself appeared at the head of an especially brilliant retinue of 5000 horsemen, in order that he might escort his guest over the bridge and through the streets of the city to his own royal resi-

dence, with the same pomp and ceremony with which he had himself been recently received when he returned from France, crowned with victory, as the leader of his valiant army. Eberhard Windeck of Mayence, Sigismund's German secretary, cannot find words enough to depict all this pomp and magnificence. "I truly believe," he says, "that never before did any man receive a king or a prince in a more splendid way than the King of England has received Sigismund, King of the Romans. For, upon that day, all was so costly and so full of glorious pomp, that it would be impossible to describe it. There was the King of England himself, with his two brothers, the bishops, the noble lords of the land, and knights and squires. The great costliness of the horses and arms, and the crowd of nobles, and of tender and lovely ladies, and the costly dresses of the burghers and burghers' dames, were beyond anything one could imagine; and all these grand people and horses went forth to meet the King of the Romans and to escort him into London with great magnificence." The splendid apartments of the royal palace at Westminster had been set in order for the reception of Sigismund, while his courteous host contentedly took up his abode on the other side of the river, in the Archbishop of Canterbury's palace at Lambeth. Henry hoped by all these attentions to win over his guest so completely to his own interests that, in case the differences with France should ever in earnest be submitted to Sigismund, he need have no apprehension in regard to the result. There was, therefore, no lack of honours and amusements, although the earnest affairs of Christendom were by no means forgotten.

It is, perhaps, not wholly uninteresting in regard to

German history, that when on the 4th of May, the parliament, after having been prorogued till Sigismund's arrival, assembled in a combined meeting of both houses in the great hall of Westminster, the King of the Romans was present. The highest seat of honour under the canopy was, however, not offered to him, as it had been at Paris, for Henry himself was seated on the throne, dressed in his royal robes, and wearing the insignia of his dignity. He made a ceremonious address to his faithful estates, not forgetting to refer specially to his distinguished guest, who, as he said, had taken the most unselfish pains to induce the French government to enter into a compact of peace and concord with England. Negotiations were pending at that very time with the Archbishop Rheinald of Rheims, who had probably been sent to England as the ambassador of Charles VI. at the suggestion of Sigismund. The powers with which he was intrusted were, however, no longer sufficient to satisfy a victor like Henry V., who would only renounce the title and crown of France on the sole condition that the peace of Bretigny, which had been extorted in 1360 from the French by Edward III., should be made the basis of the agreement, in accordance with which the half of France would have to be resigned to him. The envoy naturally enough protested that he could not enter into the discussion of so disgraceful a condition, and that rather than accede to it, his government would have recourse to the last and most desperate extremities, and again take up arms at once. It was obvious that there was no alternative but to reject all the overtures for peace. The English were, moreover, well aware of the irreconcilable hatred

entertained towards them by the Count of Armagnac, and the national party which he represented. As if to fill the measure of his embarrassment, Sigismund was informed by one of his messengers, who had lately arrived from Paris, that notwithstanding all attempts to conclude a peace, the Orleanists were taking measures to recover the important town of Harfleur at the mouth of the Seine, which had been captured by Henry. This news, we are told, brought tears to the eyes of the German King; and it is evident that he must either have deceived himself by his over-sanguine hopes, or, what is more probable, that he was already too far compromised. Henry, however, saw that he must retain him at his court, since it appeared certain that war was now unavoidable.

A series of feasts and sports, such as only the brilliant and knightly court of Westminster could devise, soon followed; while more splendid than all was the solemn meeting of the Chapter of the Order of the Garter, which was held on Sunday, the 24th of May, in St. George's Chapel at Windsor. Henry had resolved to admit among the members of this distinguished Order, which had been founded by Edward III., the imperial stranger who placed so high a value on honours of this kind, and who had himself founded an Order of the Dragon. At the same time with Sigismund, Sir William Harrington, Lord de la Zouche, and the Earls of Huntingdon and Oxford, were admitted into the Order, to fill up the vacancies which had recently occurred. The occasion was regarded as so extraordinary, that new and especially costly robes were ordered to be given at the king's expense to all the

members and office-bearers, while the servants connected with the Order, including even the musicians and the court-fools, received new suits of clothes. The collar and garter, with which Henry himself invested his imperial guest, were richly adorned with jewels; and it would appear that Sigismund took special pleasure in obeying the regulations of the statutes, which enjoin upon the knights to wear the insignia of their dignity as often as possible. Much pleasure is expressed by the English plenipotentiaries at Constance when they are able to inform their royal master that Sigismund had appeared fully equipped in the robes and insignia of the national order of knighthood, when he attended high mass the first time after his return; and an equal amount of ill-feeling was excited in France when it was known that the prince, who had offered to act as a mediator between the French and English governments, had allowed himself to be bound in such a manner to their national enemy. The Chapel at Windsor preserved, till the days of Henry VIII., the heart of St. George, which was presented to them by Sigismund.

Almost more flattering and significant, however, was another mark of esteem which the German King received from the King of England, who issued a command to the bishops, that in the customary service of the Church, they should associate with his own name that of the King of the Romans, who for a long time had given himself the most unwearied trouble in foreign countries, to restore perfect union to the holy Church, and to procure for the princes and nations of Christendom a lasting peace. We seem here to catch a glimpse of the motives

which actuated the enthusiastic Henry, who knew well how to estimate at its right value the purer elements in Sigismund's zeal; and who, in after years, on many occasions was wont to confide to his intimate friend and brother-knight, in certain secret documents which are still extant, the relations in which he stood to France and Burgundy. The Order of the Garter and the object which both entertained in common in regard to the Church, were the means of cementing a union between the two dynasties, which was not again loosened until the course of public affairs had taken a perfectly different direction.

All these attentions and intimate associations with the sovereign could not however exempt Sigismund, even in England, from the many vexations connected with the charge that had been entrusted to him by the Council. William, Duke of Holland, a grandson of the Wittelsbach Emperor Louis, had been invited to take part in the conferences, and he accordingly made his appearance in England at the beginning of June. It is related however, that Henry, in accordance with English etiquette, recommended Sigismund not to ride forth and meet the Duke, as was the German custom on such occasions, and that he thus was the cause of arousing a feeling of ill-will between the two. The Duke of Holland did, however, first pay his respects at Westminster, and then at Lambeth. The proposal for an armistice was discussed by the three princes, on the 13th, when it was resolved that the town of Harfleur, which was especially interested in the matter, was to remain in the custody of Sigismund and William. The Armagnac party, in the meanwhile, do not appear to have paid much attention

to this compact, for they endeavoured soon afterwards to take the place by force, but in this attempt they were frustrated by the arrival of an English fleet, under the Duke of Bedford, which, after giving them a severe repulse on the 15th of August, relieved Harfleur. While the London treaty proved thus useless from the very beginning, further differences arose between Sigismund and William. The latter had indeed been invested at Westminster with the principality which he held under the German Empire, and no objection had been made by the English to the proceeding; but when he expressed a wish of having the succession secured to his only child, a daughter named Jacqueline, Sigismund refused to comply with his demand in consideration of the rights of established descent. William, hereupon, angrily left his presence, and on the plea of going out for a ride, embarked on board his own ship, without having taken leave of theEnglish court. Nothing could be more ill-timed for Sigismund, who had formed the design of returning home at his leisure with the Dutch squadron, and it now became more and more clear to him that he was entirely in the power of the King of England. Henry, indeed, detained him with all possible show of welcome, although in parliament and among the populace in London, voices were already raised in disparagement of the foreign sovereign, whose plans of mediation had all vanished in empty air. It was probably on this account that Sigismund left the royal palace as early as July, and took up his abode either at Canterbury or at Ledes in Kent. The preparations and equipments which Henry was at that very time personally superintending at Southampton, are indeed the strongest evidence of

the impracticability of the entire scheme of mediation. He had been more than three months in the country, and it was already whispered at the Council of Constance that the king was a prisoner in England, while according to some reports he was dead; and what was perhaps almost worse, the Parisians asserted that poverty and debts had compelled Sigismund to enter into the English alliance.

The amount of truth in all these reports, and the security with which Henry V. pressed on towards his aim, were made clearly apparent on the 15th of August, when the two monarchs signed a treaty, both offensive and defensive, at Canterbury, at the very same time at which Bedford defeated the French. They promised in their own names, and in those of their successors, to maintain peace and amity to the end of time, and Sigismund even upbraids the French government with having prolonged the schism, while he solemnly pledges himself to aid Henry, King of England and France in maintaining his rights; and the latter, in his turn, promises to assist the King of the Romans in winning back for the German empire the territory that had been so long occupied by the French. An application was made to parliament and the electors of the Empire to ratify this treaty; but although the former complied with the demand in the month of October, all Sigismund's endeavours proved of no avail to induce the diet earnestly to take the matter into consideration.

Henry now at length ordered the long wished-for ships to be made ready, and presented, as parting gifts to his friend, costly gold and silver vessels, set with pearls, diamonds and sapphires, and a purse of 5,000 golden

crowns, together with the mantle and insignia of the Order of the Garter, which were worth fully 11,000 crowns. With these treasures Sigismund crossed to Calais on the 24th of August, attended by a stately retinue, and conveyed across the channel by a fleet manned with 3,000 sailors. And a few days later, on the 4th of September, King Henry and he again met, when Sigismund made a final attempt to secure peace for the west of Europe. We now learn that the French government, exasperated at the treaty of Canterbury, had again despatched the Archbishop of Rheims to Henry; but this time with additional stipulations, coupled with the invidious proposal that England should satisfy her thirst for the acquisition of land by taking possession of the territory under dispute between Germany and France. In October, Sigismund had a conference with John, Duke of Burgundy, who, on this occasion, did homage for the imperial fief of Alost. The interests of all parties were, however, diametrically opposed, and the only result was a short armistice for the winter months. On Friday, the 16th of October, King Henry returned to England after he had accompanied Sigismund on board ship, and taken a most affectionate leave of him. We are told that the two monarchs could not tear themselves from each others arms; for they had lived together so long and so intimately, that each had opened his whole heart to the other; and it is related that there was a general and glad surprise evinced by every one who witnessed these marks of affection.

Now, however, Sigismund was at last compelled to think of his further progress, and miserably and un-

comfortably he fared in his attempts to reach his own states. He had sent Eberhard Windeck to Bruges with the commission to pawn most of his beautiful presents, and raise money upon them among the Lubeck merchants there. As the passage through the domains of the Duke of Holland, as well as through Burgundy and the Flemish cities, which did not belong to the empire, had been interdicted to him, he did not think that it would be safe for him to venture by that route. Fortunately for him he found the town of Dordrecht willing to grant him some vessels, in which he entered the Rhine under the convoy of four English ships of war, which had accompanied him from Calais to protect him from the attack of any hostile powers. Thus, almost like a criminal, did the bearer of the German crown return to his empire, and it was only when he found himself under the protection of the Duke of Juliers, and in the city of Aix la Chapelle, that he felt safe and at his ease. More than a year had passed when he again entered Constance, on the 17th of January, 1417, after finding all his efforts to procure peace utterly unavailing, and when Henry V. was already prepared to enter upon the conquest of France.

The Council in the meantime succeeded, notwithstanding the threatening discords of the Church, in restoring unity to the hierarchy in the person of Martin V. The heretics, Wiclif and Huss, and their anti-Catholic doctrines, had been condemned; while a decree had even gone forth, in obedience to which the quiet grave at Lutterworth was forcibly opened one day in the year 1428, and the bones that lay mouldering within it burnt on the spot, and their ashes cast into the stream, whose

waters might have borne them through the Avon and the Severn to mingle in the ocean with the last remains of the Bohemian martyr. But what availed all these triumphs? The spiritual opposition which the Reformation had contributed to produce, could never again be allayed by any recognition of the infallibility of popes and councils; while the national convulsions, to which the new ideas gave rise, filled the world with more bloodshed than any that had been witnessed before the pious fathers of the Council of Constance sent forth their imperial envoy on his futile mission.

It appears, however, that although henceforward the course of events flowed in a parallel direction both in the east and west, the bonds of union which were cemented by the two monarchs at Canterbury continued unbroken. In May, 1420, Henry, after his great victories, dictated the terms of the peace of Troyes, by which he assumed the place due to the dauphin, and among the attesting witnesses of the deed, the name of the King of the Romans stands foremost. Sigismund had, however, excused himself from a direct participation in the war with France on the valid ground that he must make head against the rebellious Bohemians, who had adopted the same heretical doctrines as those which the followers of Wiclif professed; and, in the spring of 1420, he entered upon his first crusade against these heretics. The termination of this expedition, and the fearful contests to which it gave rise, are well known. King Henry followed the course of these events with the most vivid interest; and we still find among the English records the reports which reached him regarding the siege of Prague, and similar events. In the year 1422 a personal interview between

Sigismund and Henry was again made the subject of discussion; but at that very time the valiant Lancastrian prince fell a victim to a rapidly fatal illness, while at the very summit of his fame, and in the very fulness of his maturity. In one of his testamentary papers he characterised the King of the Romans as the most faithful defender of the Church and of the faith, and bequeathed to him, as a memento of himself, a costly sword.

When, in the sequel, the unnatural rule of the English in France threatened to become more and more insecure, and the embittered Luxemburg prince was still contending with the Hussites for his lost crown, the English princes showed themselves especially anxious to maintain the alliance of the year 1416. Thus, on one occasion, about the year 1427, Henry's uncle, the wealthy and politic Cardinal Beaufort, announced his intention to lead a band of English crusaders against the Hussites, who were then waging a fearful war. The entire orthodox world rejoiced, for the pope had named him to be his legate in Germany, Bohemia, and Hungary; and the Lancastrian and Luxemburg princes were now ranged for the first time side by side on the field of battle. At this moment, however, the troops which it had taken so long a time to enlist and to convey across the channel, were diverted from this object, that they might afford the aid that was so much needed to counteract the first great achievements of the Maid of Orleans.

Sigismund, in his later and less happy years, was wont to assume on St. George's day the badge of the garter; whilst, at the coronation of Henry VI. at Westminster, in the year 1430, a magnificent plateau

was used, which represented the Emperor, and his departed friend, Henry V., with the infant king on his knees before him, holding in his hands a ballad against the Lollards. And, finally, when Sigismund died, on the 9th of December, 1437, masses for the repose of his soul were, by royal command, read in all the churches of England; and Henry VI., in person, surrounded by the great officers of the crown, attended these solemn services for the dead at St. Paul's; while the garter, which Sigismund had received, was transferred to the Grand Duke Albert of Austria, his son-in-law, and successor in the empire. About the period when the house of Luxemburg ceased to bear the imperial diadem, we begin to note the first traces of the downfall of the Lancastrians. Thus similar tendencies are met with in the characters of princes, who exhibit very few other evidences of mutual affinity, and thus at some one moment of their lives an indelible character is impressed on their union which may for generations influence the fate of their dynasties.

X.

THE MAID OF ORLEANS.

HISTORY presents certain periods of transition, during which a long established order of things passes away and disappears almost before another has begun to dawn. In this struggle between the old and the new elements, we often notice special phenomena, which are peculiar not only to individuals, but to the circumstances surrounding them, and to which there attaches a charm of novelty, which from their isolation in regard to other things, seems to impart to them an almost miraculous character. The fifteenth century was an epoch of this kind, when the middle ages had not yet wholly past away, and the modern world had not fully dawned. Many of the special supports which for centuries together had upheld the structure of the Church and State, had indeed long since grown rotten, threatening to fall to pieces on the first vigorous assault of that new force which was infusing a fresh spirit into the secular as well as the ecclesiastical system; but the germ that had been planted amid the mouldering remains of the past, had not yet attained sufficient vigour to replace the growth that had been matured by the culture of the middle ages.

In Germany there reigned an emperor, who, however insignificant his power might be, was still able to withhold from the princes of the empire the full rights of sovereignty which they were striving to wrench from him. In England the monarch still considered himself able to maintain undivided sovereignty, although the two houses of parliament were conjoined with him in the administration under the same forms which they now present. The pope, as the supreme head of the one undivided Church of western Christendom, still claimed the long undisputed obedience of all the kingdoms of the west, although their rulers would no longer permit the ancient streams of their national wealth to be poured, as in bygone days, into the coffers of Rome. This opposition was supported by a spiritual party, which, disregarding mere verbal authority, seemed disposed to attack the fundamental doctrines of the Church itself. Everywhere the minds of men were filled with religious aspirations; and while in Germany pious men were trying to find peace for their souls in the indulgence of a spiritual mysticism, a fire was smouldering in two remote parts of western Christendom. In England, a brave and simple-hearted priest had ventured, in a spirit far in advance of his age, to attack with an almost puritanical zeal the right of the Church to its worldly possessions; appealing to the pure word of God in attestation of the truth of the enlightened doctrines which he advanced. The stake and the scaffold had in vain been erected as a defence against the heresy of the Lollards in England. The sparks of truth which had flown far over land and sea, had been kindled into flame amid the distant valleys of Bohemia. Then burst forth, in the midst of those

terrible wars with the Hussites, a spirit of fierce enthusiasm, whose all consuming flames extended far and wide, under the stimulus of religious faith, moral convictions, hatred of race, and the wildest fanaticism. But the remedy had been too early applied; the miseries of Europe and the disruption of discipline and morals which had spread alike among the great and humble, could not be mitigated by such severe measures, and neither party was as yet permitted to rejoice in victory.

France was, in many respects, situated the same as the countries by which she was surrounded. The power of her princes had, however, increased more steadily, and while they had endeavoured to comprise the monarchy within its natural boundaries, they had succeeded to a certain extent in maintaining a national position in regard to the Church of Rome. It even sometimes appeared as if the state policy which was now dawning upon the coming age, had been developed more rapidly here than elsewhere. The country and its rulers were, however, destined to meet with a trial which had the effect of turning them aside for many years from their onward path of progress. King Charles VI. had lost his reason soon after his accession to the throne; and although he may sometimes have been visited by lucid intervals, such a rule as his, which was continued for more than forty years, afforded free scope for the display of the selfish views and passions of his scheming foreign consort and of a number of the princes of the blood. It had been the custom to bestow upon the latter the larger provinces and principalities of the kingdom; but the more sensible of the kings had shown a disposition to consider these endowments merely as crown fiefs,

without allowing them to assume the character of patrimonial dignities. Now, however, when the crown was worn by an imbecile prince, the magnates of the land were not contented with merely striving to become independent chiefs; and two of their number, the king's uncle, the Duke of Orleans, and his cousin, the Duke of Burgundy, carried on a bitter contest for the regency of the kingdom. At this time too, a love of pleasure and luxuriance, and the most unbridled immorality, to which the Franco-Gallic races seem at all times to have been easily disposed, had become so deeply ingrafted among all ranks, from the highest to the lowest, including prelates, nobles, and burghers, that all the bases of family union had been overthrown while the ties of relationship and patriotism seemed about to fall into equal disregard. In the midst of this abasement, the few God-fearing men who still ventured to call upon their brethren to repent, could not command a hearing. At this moment the murder of the licentious Duke of Orleans, which had been accomplished by a band of men wearing masks, who fell upon their victim in the streets of Paris, on a dark November night, in the year 1407, was the signal for a succession of the most terrible outrages, and the deepest humiliation. The deed, which had been executed by order of the Duke of Burgundy, gave rise to one of the most horrible forms of civil war ever witnessed. Paris scarcely endured more fearful excesses in the year 1793, than those which the factions of the Armagnacs and Burgundians perpetrated against one another. The Duke of Burgundy was supported by the scum of the populace and all the democratic elements in the land; while the nobility, more especially in the

southern portions of the country, adhered to the house of Orleans. It was at this moment that the new and powerful ruler who had just ascended the throne of England, determined to follow the example of his ancestors, and to declare war against the neighbouring land, which was then sinking under the weight of its own disorganization. The pretext for this expedition was a pretended claim to the crown of the Valois; but the object was to occupy in an extensive foreign war those restless spirits at home who were either infected by heretical ideas, or who bore ill-will to the House of Lancaster for the bold stroke of policy by which it had gained possession of the throne. Every one is familiar with Shakespeare's Prince Harry; and every one has followed his Henry V. in his daring landing before Harfleur, on his way to that unparalleled victory at Agincourt, where numbering one man for every five of the enemy—for he had only a small army of 10,000 men, composed for the most part of irregular bare-footed archers—he defeated the flower of the French nobility, whose forces amounted to upwards of 50,000 men. A large portion of ancient France soon lay subdued at the feet of the victor, whose advantages had been further augmented by the alliance of the Duke of Burgundy, who, after having at first maintained an attitude of neutrality, went over to Henry's side, in consequence of the bloody deed that had been perpetrated at the bridge of Monterau. Here, during a conference which both parties had entered upon for the sake of effecting a reconciliation, and which was ratified by the most solemn oaths, the Armagnacs, in the presence of the Dauphin, had slain Duke John, in expiation of the murder of the Duke of Orleans, which was

due to his instigation. And now Philip, the son and successor of the murdered man, stretched forth the hand of friendship to the conqueror; while Isabelle, the queen of France, entered into an unnatural compact, by which, in accordance with the treaty of Troyes, Henry V. was to receive the hand of Catherine—the Kate who is described by Shakespeare as lisping her broken English—while after the death of the imbecile Charles he was, moreover, to succeed to the throne of France. Thus the Dauphin, by the consent of his own parents, was to be alike excluded from the possession of land and people. Two years later, however, in the summer of 1422, the valiant conqueror died in the prime of life, only a few months before the death of the old King Charles, when England and France were, *de facto*, united under one head. A child in the cradle, not yet a twelvemonth old, wore the crown of those two countries, which had hitherto been almost as completely separated by policy, as they were by position. This was indeed a marvel, and many must have asked, with anxious forebodings, whether such a state of things was destined to be permanent.

At first it appeared, indeed, as if the union might prove binding; for France, thoroughly exhausted, bowed her head almost unresistingly to the foreign yoke. The departments in the north of the country hoped, perhaps, that their privileges, which had often been crushed under the feet of the sovereigns of their native dynasties, might meet with greater respect from the parliament of England. The whole strength of the nobility seemed to have been annihilated on the field of Agincourt. The young and brilliant Duke of Orleans, who had been drawn living from beneath a

mass of dead bodies, was pining within a dismal castle in a remote district of the north of England; where he poured forth his grief and longing in plaintive songs, addressed to his country and his mourning bride; while he employed his leisure in learning English, which he mastered so thoroughly, that he was able to turn his own poems into an English form of verse, an accomplishment in which few of his countrymen have been able to emulate him. The Dauphin, Charles, charged with his mother's curse on account of the murder which he had tolerated, and detested by many of his countrymen, wandered restlessly and in poverty along the banks of the Loire, attended only by a few unwavering but blood-stained companions. The death of the conqueror did not appear to open any better prospect to him, for Henry's brother, the Duke of Bedford, a man whose gifts in the field equalled those of the deceased monarch, whom he perhaps surpassed in regard to the qualifications necessary to a politician, held the reins of government with a powerful and steady hand. Bedford governed the subjected kingdom for a time with a sagacity that excited the wonder of all; and the highest tribunals of the land, the parliament and university of Paris, showed themselves more willing, day by day, to submit to his commands. Had the finances of both countries not been hopelessly embarrassed in consequence of their long-continued wars, and had not his measures been thwarted by many of the evils incidental to a minority, and finally—and perhaps principally—had Bedford's life not been prematurely cut off, his powers of mind would probably have enabled him to prevent any systematic and enthusiastic rising

of the French, and he might thus, perhaps, have maintained a double Anglo-Gallic rule. At one time he was master of all the districts north of the Loire, and of the coast lands as far as the Pyrenees. Only the territories which were then included under the names of Touraine and Languedoc, and the central and south-eastern parts of France, were still in the hands of the French; for here no English seneschal commanded the fortresses, and no Lincoln or Derby bowmen guarded the roads with their arrows. There was, indeed, no lack of fighting in the north of France either; for, from time to time, the Armagnacs made inroads into Normandy and Champagne, but a handful of Englishmen always beat them in the open field; and, after a time, the opposition of the French did not go beyond disputing the possession of a few strong and high castles.

In the year 1428, it was finally determined at a council of war, held by the English captains at Paris, to carry the war across the Loire, and by the conquest of the city of Orleans, which was the key to that district, to strike the first decisive blow. It was in vain that the Duke of Bedford, conscious of his insufficient means and the lack of sympathy with which the English were regarded in the south, warned them against this attempt; for evil influences in the government at home overpowered his warning voice. A valiant army, under the Earl of Salisbury, undertook the assault. After the suburbs on the south side of the river had been occupied, Orleans itself was surrounded by entrenchments; for the citizens and garrison had begun to defend themselves with the most desperate intrepidity, and many bold marauders had joined their number,

making their way unmolested under the guns of the enemy, laden with provisions and booty of every kind: Thus passed six long winter months, in which the weal or woe of France and her whole future seemed to be linked to this one spot. The want and despair of the besieged increased to the most terrible degree, and after the last reinforcement had been thrown into the city, the nation appeared hopelessly to collapse. What chance of better days remained, now that their legitimate prince had relinquished every expectation of success? Like a degenerate type of his wretched people, he wasted his days in the society of his mistress, and regardless of honour or shame, looked unconcernedly at the unspeakable miseries which his valiant city was enduring, and heeded not the strange warnings which, even at that very moment, heaven was sending to him.

The religious spirit of the times had at length reached the French nation; but the mendicant friars, who wandered through the land, preaching repentance to the wretched people, and interpreting to them the dark visions of the Apocalypse, had been expelled and persecuted by Charles, as much as by the English. When it was now announced that Orleans must fall, and that with it the rest of his country would be lost to him, Charles, who was wrapt in his own sensual dreams, conceived that it would be better at once to flee than to perish with the last brave heroes of his land. The schemes of Henry seemed about to be realized; and France, which had hitherto been an independent link of connexion between the civilization of ancient and of modern times, had very nearly become a province of the British island, when an event occurred of so strange

and special a nature, that history presents no parallel to it; for it was as if an angel from heaven had brought salvation to France. Strange indeed was it that a woman should be destined to lead to unparalleled victories a nation, whose men had gloried in their own knightly deeds, and whose women had as yet never been permitted to assume the social dignity to which they were entitled.

It is not our purpose, in the present place, to give a complete delineation of the life and deeds of the Maid of Orleans; nor do we purpose to lift the mysterious veil that shrouds the psychical characteristics of this wonderful being. We will only attempt, by the aid of the very comprehensive materials at our disposal, clearly and perspicuously to sketch the main features of her character. She appears before us, in her life and actions, so humanly lovely, and so tenderly dignified, that none of the arts—whether poetry, painting, or sculpture—have hitherto done her justice. Be it remembered that the narrative we give is not a legend or a myth, but an earnest, trustworthy history, recorded in the dry, matter of fact chronicles of the times in which she lived.

Not far from the sources of the Meuse, near the borders of Champagne and the Duchy of Lorraine, where, from olden times, the German dialect had been spoken by French tongues, lies the hamlet of Domremy, which, together with the village of Greux, was included in the diocese of Taul, which was, in those days, undoubtedly a portion of the German empire. It was a home-like, peaceful valley, enclosed by hills, on which an ancient oak forest—the *Bosc-chesnu*—raised aloft its leafy summits. Here lived, in their simple hut, Jacques Darc

and his wife, Isabeau Rommée, true-hearted, pious peasants, whose immediate ancestors had probably been bound to the soil as villeins. Among their five children a daughter had been born to them in the beginning of the year 1412, who received at the sacred font the name of Jeanne, though by the villagers she was called Jeannette. She had early learnt from her pious mother to repeat her Patefnoster and her Ave Maria; and she was soon able to assist her in sewing and in other domestic labours. She was in all respects a willing, truthful, and sincerely pious child. While she was indebted to her mother for her religious faith, she owed to her father her love of her country. Jacques Darc and his kindred often led a sorry life in their village, which was situated in the midst of a population that adhered to the Burgundian party. At their own fireside, the family often talked of the general necessities of France, and of the sufferings of her prince; although these good people, in their secluded home, knew of these things only from hearsay, through the heavy pressure of increased taxation, or from the squabbles and mock-fights among the youth of the neighbouring villages, when they played at being Burgundians and Frenchmen. Only on one occasion a troop of Burgundian marauders burst in upon the valley, and compelled the Darcs to take refuge for a fortnight in the neighbouring strong town of Neufchateau. On their return home, Jeannette resumed her industrious and domestic course of life, which was only interrupted by her devotional exercises, or when she received the commission, which did not often happen, of driving to the pasture-ground the few sheep which her father owned. It is a mere myth,

although certainly a very ancient one, to represent her as a shepherdess—*la pauvre bergerette*—musing through the long hours of the day as she roamed along the hill-side, holding secret communion with the birds on the trees. Instead of this, it is certain that she grew up under the very eyes of her pious parents. There is also another assumption, on which the blackest accusations were subsequently based, which also admits of decisive contradiction. In the neighbouring wood there was indeed a spring which had the reputation of curing fevers, and near it an aged beech, round which, as the old people still maintained, the fairies danced at night upon the elfin rings. The terror of the country people was, however, no longer excited by this enchanted spot; and the young men and maidens were wont to celebrate the return of spring and keep their May games here; while even the pastor of the village, on Ascension Day, read aloud the Gospel in the open air, under the leafy boughs of the old majestic tree. Most probably Joan Darc had often taken part in these joyous sports; but those who knew her well, and had been eye-witnesses of her daily course of life, most emphatically deny that she had ever shown a superstitious belief in the ancient traditions of the spot, or that she even had any special tendency to believe in mysterious or supernatural things. She was, on the contrary, known to attend diligently the services at the little chapel, which lay within the wood, either to hear mass there, or to make an offering to the Virgin of her little taper. She was most decidedly not superstitious, although she had the ready credulity of a child.

It happened that one day, in the summer of 1424, when the young girl was walking in her father's garden,

she thought she heard a gentle voice which seemed to come to her from the direction of the church. Although it was noon and bright sunshine, the light appeared to her to brighten on the spot where she stood. Twice this strange phenomenon was repeated, and the terrified girl believed for a certainty that an angel had spoken to her, who promised her help from God, and commanded her to go forth and aid the kingdom of France. These visions recurred in a few days, when her imagination had been excited by physical causes, and at length they were manifested twice, and even thrice, in the week; and it seemed to her as if she distinctly saw and heard the Archangel Michael, who at times appeared to her to be accompanied by St. Catherine and St. Margaret. She felt herself directly addressed as "the dear child, the dear maiden Jeanne." Her terror vanished; and her voices, as she called them, soon became dear to her and identified with her religious faith, which, it must be admitted, had a leaning to mysticism. Devoutly she now prayed to the two saints, whom she determined for the future to strive to imitate. She doubted not that she held direct communion with heavenly beings, in whose palpable existence her vivid imagination had become thoroughly absorbed. Her tender years may also afford some explanation of her condition; but we have the testimony of medical witnesses of that age that she was of a thoroughly sound body. Her pure mind, moreover, exhibited not a trace of deceit, while, as we shall presently see, she was endowed with a clearness of understanding which is utterly at variance with the idea of a thoroughly sentimental enthusiasm. The singular condition in which she believed herself to be

placed was, at any rate, a reality, a manifestation, and an absorption, which gave the first impulse towards the liberation of France.

Five years passed away, during which the maiden grew in stature and in beauty. Those who saw her at that period of her life give the most favourable account of her appearance, and describe to us her graceful and slender figure, her open and animated countenance surrounded by long dark curls, the charming and almost melancholy expression of her eyes, and the soft, melodious tones of her voice. But the manifestations, which she had not as yet revealed to any living being, accompanied her continually; and in the year 1428, as she herself afterwards asserted, the heavenly admonitions became more frequent and more urgent, commanding her to arise and betake herself to the neighbouring city of Vaucouleurs, to demand from the seneschal, the knight Beaudricourt, an escort to attend her to the court of the Dauphin. Her parents and her confessor may, perhaps, have observed from certain hasty expressions, which referred exclusively to the king and the country, the agitation of her mind; but every thing admitted at that period of being referred simply to the sufferings of the whole of France. At this time, however, attempts were made to induce her, almost by force, to consent to a marriage that had been proposed for her; but she resisted all these efforts, and declared that she would serve only God and her country. Then her father, for the second time, dreamed that he saw his daughter going off with a troop of soldiers, but he would rather, he asserted, drown her with his own hands than survive such infamy. On this account he kept her carefully under his own eyes.

When, however, she was allowed shortly afterwards to visit for a few days an uncle, named Durand Laxart, who lived near Vaucouleurs, she disclosed for the first time to this relative that she, the poor maiden of Domremy, had been called to go to the Dauphin, and accompany the king to Rheims for his coronation. The peasant no doubt listened to her with wondering surprise; but at length her importunate entreaties induced him to go and announce her coming to the knight Beaudricourt. This nobleman received him ungraciously enough, and recommended him to bring the foolish girl to her senses by soundly boxing her ears, and to take her home to her parents. But Jeannette would not rest; and, notwithstanding all the contempt which she met with, she persisted in going to Beaudricourt, even though it were only to announce to him that during the next season of Lent the Lord would bring salvation to the Dauphin, and that she it was who was to lead him to Rheims.

We find her now again at home, more restless and more enthusiastic than ever; for the report of the siege and threatened fall of Orleans was passing anxiously from mouth to mouth through the length and breadth of the land. Then it was that she thought she heard the clear voice of the Archangel, saying, "Arise, my daughter, it is thou who shalt bring salvation;" and now she could no longer tolerate delay. Persuading her parents that her uncle required her services in the house, she left home. She was conscious at the time of her untruthfulness and deception; but in after years she declared that she knew herself to be absolved from this sin, for God had willed it so, and He was more than a hundred

fathers and a hundred mothers. It was in the depth of winter, in the year 1429, that she left her native village with her uncle, only bidding a hasty farewell to the companions whom she met on the way. The season of Lent had not yet begun when she again presented herself before Beaudricourt, who, regarding the whole affair as inexplicable and suspicious, summoned his chaplain in order that, in case of necessity, the reverend father might exorcise the evil spirit that had possessed this obstinate maiden. But when she had asked for his blessing, she said, "Know ye not that it is written, that the kingdom which has been brought to destruction through a woman shall be redeemed by a maiden of the marshes of Lorraine?" And, in fact, the increasing excitement of the minds of men in those days had revived certain prophecies, which were popularly ascribed to the old and wise Merlin,—a circumstance which unquestionably may have contributed to induce several persons to believe in her during her second visit to Vaucouleurs—and in addition to her uncle, there were some brave and honest men, as the knight Jean de Metz and the Sieur Bertrand de Toulengy, who were well disposed to her, and in whom she might safely trust under all circumstances. She could not, however, as yet move the seneschal to give her an escort. He delayed, either because he would have nothing to do with such a strange adventure, or because he was waiting for the instructions which he had demanded in regard to this matter from the court of his sovereign, at Chinon. At length, on the 23d of February, he allowed her to depart, accompanied by these two knights, a royal herald, and three serving-men. As she would in future associate only with men, she

assumed masculine attire for her own security, not omitting even the customary greaves and spurs. The inhabitants of Vaucouleurs, whose hearts she had rapidly won, had combined together to purchase a horse for her; and on her departure, Beaudricourt himself presented her with a sword, which, however, was accompanied by the cold and doubting words, "Go forth, let what will happen." Thus closes the first episode of this remarkable history, in which we find this enthusiastic maiden imparting to her countrymen the hopes and schemes which she had long cherished in her own heart, and which she was now for the first time bringing into execution. Success, however, could only be achieved by the aid of similar sympathetic feelings and aspirations throughout the whole of her native land. In those very districts where once St. Remigius had baptized and crowned the Frankish king Clovis, there still lingered the old faith in the royal house, and an unshaken fidelity to the crown and lilies of France. The village church of Domremy, like many others in the neighbourhood, had been dedicated in ancient times to this saint, and bore his name. It was to a certain extent a religion of the national kingdom, that had lain dormant among the masses, which was now awakened into life at the appearance of Jeanne Darc.

But we must now follow the maiden on her mission. On the eleventh day, not without dangers and difficulties, she crossed the Loire and entered Chinon. After having spent one day in the most violent agitation, in the poor tavern in which she had taken up her abode, she was summoned to her first audience on the 9th of March. She passed with composure and perfect self-

possession up the brilliantly-lighted hall, and through the midst of the gaudily dressed attendants, towards the prince, who was simply dressed, in order that he might not attract her notice, and addressed him in these words: "Noble Dauphin, I am the maiden Jeanne who has been sent to you by the Heavenly King, to announce that you shall be crowned in the city of Rheims, and be his vicegerent upon earth." The conversation which Charles now entered into with her, and the questions which he put to her, were heard by only a few witnesses, and the revelation of some secret, or a communication of a mysterious nature appears to have excited a disposition to confidence from the very first in the mind of the prince. The nature of this communication is not very clear, but, according to one report, Jeanne reminded him of a prayer which he had once, in the stillness of his chamber, offered up to Heaven, that if he were the true scion of the royal house he might find safety in Castile or Scotland. Charles received her in a friendly manner: his light and feeling heart was probably able to appreciate the genuineness of the enthusiasm, which here spoke to him from the lowest grades of the people through the lips of this young girl. He was struck, too, by her reply to the greeting of the Duke of Alençon, to whom she said, "Welcome! the more princes of the blood hold together the better it will be for all!" His attention was arrested when she spoke with almost tender emotion of the Duke of Orleans, who must, she said, be rescued from his prison in Pontefract castle. All the fire that glowed in her breast was reserved for her prince and her native land; for any other love, such as the vindictiveness of her foes and the imagination of poets

would ascribe to her, her heart could find no place. But however well-disposed the Dauphin showed himself to her, and although he may have realized to some degree the mysterious enthusiasm by which she was impelled, he did not the less listen to the many influential voices which whispered to him, that the peasant girl was deluded, nay, perhaps, bewitched, and that she must be tried by the holy Inquisition, before any compact could be entered into with her. The very indifference with which Charles always treated her, affords the noblest refutation of the violent accusations advanced by the English, who declared that the French had made use of her as a mere puppet to instil enthusiasm into the minds of the soldiery against the national foe. While she herself was incessantly urging those around her to adopt active measures, a small but powerful party at court was indefatigable in trying to frustrate the whole of her great scheme.

And such was probably from the first the object aimed at when Charles sent her to Poitiers, in order that she might be brought before a tribunal of doctors of divinity. Certain it is that treacherous plots were laid against her, but she triumphed over all these machinations by the pertinent replies which she made to her judges, in which she displayed an amount of sound common sense which has not been sufficiently regarded in the estimate of her character, but which affords a proof that, in addition to her high mental excitement, her mind possessed a strong practical bias. Her examiners naturally made inquiries regarding her visions. One of the pious and learned fathers, who spoke with the strong provincial dialect of the Limousin, had the simplicity to

ask in what language the saints conversed with her; on which Jeanne replied, "In a better mode of speech than your own." "Dost thou believe in God?" demanded another of her judges; on which she returned the answer, "Yes, and perhaps more than you do:" and when a third asked still more unnecessarily, "Why shouldst thou need soldiers if these voices have announced to thee that God will release France?" she rejoined with equal promptitude, "The soldiers must fight, but it is God who gives the victory." The reverend doctors were, however, probably more surprised and touched than convinced, when they gave it as their opinion that she was a weak and simple girl, who was manifestly moved by divine inspiration, and that she should be allowed to go to Orleans. When she had sustained an examination with a similar result before the Queen of Sicily, the mother-in-law of the Dauphin, and other noble ladies, and all had been unanimous in their praise of this pure and innocent creature, she was finally allowed, after a month's time, to carry out her project. Charles himself gave her, at her own request, a complete suit of steel armour, and the Duke of Alençon presented her with a horse. Her standard was prepared in accordance with her own directions, and bore upon a white ground, sprinkled with golden lilies, a figure of the Saviour standing on the globe, and having two angels praying at his side, the whole being surmounted by the words, "Jhesus. Maria." A discovery has lately been made of the account of the twenty-five livres which were paid to the artist who executed the painting. A sword had been brought for her, at her request, from the Chapel of St. Catherine, at Fierbois, where she had once paid her vows when on her journey,

and where she had seen the weapon on the monument of a knight. At the same time she received a fixed retinue similar to that of a general or other military commander, for she was attended by both her faithful knights, several pages, a chaplain, and, as esquires, by two of her brothers, who had come, to her unspeakable joy, to assure her of her parents' forgiveness and blessing, and to whose protection the lowly girl could more securely trust than to that of any other men. With this array she now entered Blois, where a small army had been collected together, with which an attempt was to be made to rescue the city of Orleans.

With what surprise was she regarded when she entered armed cap-à-pie, and showed that she was able after a little practice to wield her weapons with skill! It was only during the first few nights that she passed in her armour that she felt as if the weight of her coat-of-mail would stifle her, and she rose on the following mornings thoroughly exhausted; but her robust frame and habit speedily enabled her to tolerate the burden. More difficult, in the meanwhile, was it for her to endure the rudeness of a camp life; but here again she was nobly supported by brave men, and by her own example she stimulated others not only to fight, but also to pray and to confess. Thus a spirit of religious enthusiasm gradually found place in the camp, although Jeanne had still frequently to complain of the excessive cursing and swearing of the men. It is, indeed, remarkable that she herself should have fallen into this knightly failing; for when she had for some time heard those about her swearing, some by heaven and by hell, and others by their ladies, and some still more egotistically by their own

beards, she fell into the habit, whenever she was in a passion, of making use of the asseveration of "Par mon Martin!" Martin being the name which she gave to her baton of command.

The opposite party at court gave her only too frequently occasion for such outbursts of passionate and righteous indignation. Instead of pressing on into the city, and forcing a passage through the entrenchments of the English as she recommended, they crossed to the southern bank of the river. She was therefore obliged, in company with the valiant Count Dunois, to approach Orleans by boat, on the 29th of April, under the fire of the enemy's guns. The exhausted garrison was made aware of her appearance by a spirited and threatening letter, in which she communicated to the English her approach. It is scarcely necessary to give a detailed report of the entrance of the armed maiden-warrior, and of that first achievement of hers, which fell upon the depressed spirits of her countrymen like an electric spark, rousing them at once to sudden action. In one short week—in which she inspired all who fought on her side with the most enthusiastic and devoted respect, by her humble and meek devotion at church, her sensible advice at the council, and her heroism during the assault upon the enemy's lines—the freedom of Orleans was achieved. On the 8th of May, the English hastily raised the siege. The first charge in her heavenly mission had therefore been fulfilled, and the national desire for liberty was unloosened, and now burst forth like water that has broken the dam that opposed its course. The heroine, who had wept like a timid girl when first she saw her own blood flow, after she was

struck by an arrow, must have seemed to her countrymen like an angel from heaven, when she appeared in the midst of the smoke, or wherever showers of arrows were falling the thickest, equipped in a coat of mail, with a helmet on her head, and holding the sacred standard in her hand; while the English, at whom she hurled defiance from the walls, and who encountered her bright and gleaming form in the thickest of the fight, declared, with equal sincerity of conviction, that she must be the offspring of hell, a limb of Satan, or some devilish witch; for the consciousness of victory which she had so fiercely wrung from the foes of France, she had restored to her own countrymen.

Her voices in the meanwhile constantly urged her forward to her next charge. But at court, where she had indeed been received with acclamations after her first deed of heroism, she had again to contend with the procrastination of the prince, and the evil thoughts of those proud unbending nobles, who entertained nearly as bad an opinion of her as her enemies, and who saw in her origin, and in that rising of the lower classes, which had been effected through her means, a worse danger to the kingdom than the rule of foreigners could have brought upon it. But she alone knew no fear. Once when the council had assembled, she knocked at the door of the hall, and entering, threw herself at the feet of the prince, exclaiming, "Noble Dauphin, deliberate no longer, but prepare with all speed to go to Rheims, where your crown awaits you." The young Duke of Alençon was again the one who entered more fully than others into her schemes, and he readily associated himself with her. She accompanied him when

he went to take leave of the duchess: and when the latter entreated her with tender earnestness to watch over her husband, she answered with knightly assurance, "Fear nothing, madam, I will bring him back to you in health and safety, so that you shall have cause to rejoice." Great was her joy when she found herself again mounted on horseback, and following the banks of the Loire, where she drove the foe from their last strongholds! Two young nobles, named Laval, who had joined the banners of the duke, wrote to inform their mother of their delight when first they met the maiden. "When we visited her in her quarters," they said, "she ordered wine to be brought, and expressed the hope that ere long we might pledge each other at Paris. ... But how can we describe to you her heavenly countenance! we found her fully equipped in bright steel armour, having only her head bare, and holding a small battle-axe in her hand. A large black charger stood before the door, impetuously pawing the ground, and would not suffer her to mount; but when she ordered him to be led past the cross by the church, he stood motionless, so that she was able to get into the saddle. When she was mounted, she said with quite a womanly tone, 'Priests, pray for us! and now, soldiers, forward!'" And thus her band of followers rode forth, following her standard, under which another fierce day's fight was won on the 11th of June. The assault of the castle of Jargeau may indeed be characterised as the crowning glory of her heroism. "Let the trumpets sound, and forward, noble duke, in God's name!" she cried to Alençon, as she made her way by his side up the wall. "Fear not; have I not promised the duchess to lead you home in

health and safety?" Even when she was struck by a powerful stone ball, and thrown violently back into the moat, amid the joyful shouts of defiance of the enemy, she instantly sprang to her feet, and rushed forward with the words, "Up, friends! up! the Lord hath cursed the English, and given them even this very day into our hands!" and, indeed, from that moment the victory was decided. Such confident assurance as this could not fail to lead to success. One day at Patay, when she found herself near a strong detachment of the enemy, commanded by the much dreaded Lord Talbot, she suddenly asked the knights around her, "whether the men had good spurs?" "That they may the better get out of the way?" was asked in return. "No!" she exclaimed, "It is not of you I speak, but of the English, who will not keep their ground; but, we shall indeed need good spurs to follow them!" She was again in the right. The English, for the first time after many years, suffered a defeat in the open field, when their bravest leaders were taken prisoners. The princes and commanders who were with Jeanne could not sufficiently admire the skill she displayed in arranging the troops and artillery; while they acknowledged the certainty with which victory followed her enthusiastic appeals to the troops.

Now, however, she was to return once more to Orleans, for the Dauphin had not yet begun his journey: his delay being obviously due to the evil influence of La Trémouille, who endeavoured in every way to depreciate her triumphs, even after she had begun victoriously to clear the roads to Rheims from his enemies. It was owing to his advice that several weeks were allowed

to pass in inactivity. But at this time the name of this heroic maiden was beginning to be bruited abroad throughout the world, and it is to this period that the first authentic records belong which we still possess regarding her. Jean Charlier de Gerson, the renowned old doctor of the Council of Constance, in his last work, which was composed when he was on the very brink of the grave, said of her, "The grace of God has been manifested in the maiden." In Germany all men watched the progress of her career with interest. The university of Cologne was divided into two parties, one of which took part with her, and the other against her. An ecclesiastic at Spires named her, as Shakspere has also done, the Sibyl of France, and compared her to the sibyls of ancient days. There is still in the royal library at Munich a report, which had been drawn up by order of the Emperor Sigismund, of the marvellous events that had happened in France; and at the annual market at Ratisbon there was displayed in the year 1429 a picture of the Maid of Orleans.

All obstacles were at length removed, and finally, in the month of July, the royal progress to Rheims was effected without much danger, and without being farther retarded by waiting for the fall of Troyes. We may spare our readers the description of the anointing and crowning of King Charles within the same sacred precincts, where for centuries past his ancestors had received the crown and sceptre. Jeanne stood near the prince, holding her standard in her hand; but, at the close of the *Te Deum*, she threw herself at his feet, and, in the midst of tears of joy, exclaimed, "Now the will of God is accomplished which commanded me to relieve Orleans, and to lead you

to your coronation!" This day of her greatest happiness derived additional value from the presence of her aged father, who had come to Rheims for the sake of seeing his king and his child, and who, as we learn from accounts still extant, was treated as the honoured guest of the city.

In almost all the books that have been written on Jeanne Darc—and there are hundreds of them—it is asserted, that after the coronation she demanded leave to retire, because her mission was now completed, but that Charles retained her against her will; and that ever afterwards she was deserted by her voices and by her former good fortune. This is one of the many legendary errors that have been interwoven into her marvellous history. Had she ever really expressed this wish, she would not have been prevented by the court party from returning home. We, however, possess abundant testimony of the fallacy of this assertion. She announced to the English regent, in a threatening letter, that she was come to drive himself and his countrymen from France; and the Duke of Alençon afterwards declared upon his oath, that she had considered it as her mission to relieve Orleans, conduct the Dauphin to his coronation, drive the English out of the country, and liberate Charles of Orleans from his captivity. She remained the same to the last; and if fortune at length departed from her, and if the enthusiasm which had been kindled by this heroic maiden was no longer attended by the same results as at first, this was rather to be ascribed to the evil counsels of those to whom the king gave his confidence. Fearless as before, but not, as she herself once said, unsuspicious of treachery, she continued her earnest pleadings, till at last an advance was made

against Paris. A fierce encounter took place in the suburbs, during which she showed her old spirit, notwithstanding that she was suffering from a severe wound. A secret understanding had already been entered into with many of the inhabitants, who longed for the return of their hereditary rulers, and there was, moreover, every prospect that the foreign yoke would be finally shaken off, when the command was given to return to the Loire. We may conceive the grief of Jeanne, whose only thought was the complete liberation of her native land, when she saw herself thus maliciously thwarted in her valiant enterprise. Even when Alençon offered, in conjunction with her, to attack the English in Normandy, the proposal was not accepted. And, with the exception of some slight skirmishes, the winter passed in complete inactivity. The patent of nobility which Charles VII. gave her as a Christmas gift, in acknowledgment of her great services, scarcely afforded her any pleasure, for she herself never bore the proud arms that had been awarded to her, and which represented a crown supported on the point of a sword between two fleurs-de-lis or.

This inactivity appeared inexpressibly wearisome to her; and having at length begun to doubt the goodwill of her sovereign, she set forth in the spring of 1430, with a handful of men, without taking leave of any one, confident that wherever she appeared the French would join her ranks, and stand by her in her contest with the enemy. On her march, she learnt that the Burgundians were again laying siege to the town of Compiègne, which had been taken in the previous autumn, and she immediately determined to hasten to

the aid of the besieged, since the smallness of her numbers gave her no uneasiness. In the night between the 22d and the 23d of May, she broke through the enemy's lines, and threw herself into the city. As soon as it was morning, she called the garrison under arms, addressed them in fiery words, and then made a sortie at their head with such impetuosity that the Anglo-Burgundian division at once began to waver. The preponderance of their numbers was, however, too great; and, as one detachment yielded, fresh supplies of troops came on from every side, and she was in danger of being surrounded and cut down. Yet she covered the retreat with heroic fortitude, and was the last to turn her back on the foe. The men had almost all crossed the drawbridge, when an archer boldly sprang towards her, and seizing the end of her coat, dragged her from the saddle. The Knight of Wandonne caught her as she fell powerless to the ground, before a sortie from the castle had time to come to her rescue—and she was a prisoner. Fortune had fled from her, never to return!

With the speed of lightning the tidings of this event sped through the country. The English rejoiced, and all France was plunged in the deepest sorrow. If Charles VII. had possessed manliness enough to feel gratitude to the woman to whom he was indebted for his crown and almost his life, he would have broken through the trammels with which others had surrounded him, and roused himself from his listless inactivity to rescue her from her bonds; but he remained listless and inactive on the banks of the Loire without making the slightest effort for her rescue, while Jeanne was impatiently looking for help, and making vain attempts to

escape from the strict custody of the Count de Ligny, to whose keeping she had been entrusted. As she had fallen into the hands of Burgundians, she may, perhaps, still have cherished hopes of meeting with a milder fate. The worst, however, was still to come, as the English had resolved to have her in their own power. A few days after her capture, the Inquisition and the university at Paris applied to Duke Philip to have the Maid of Orleans given up to them, on the ground that she was a witch and a heretic, and must therefore be brought before an ecclesiastical tribunal. Soon afterwards, the Bishop of Beauvais, who was known under the by no means flattering appellation of "Pierre Cauchon," presented himself at the Burgundian court, and was, in fact, the instrument through whom this innocent and inspired creature was to be treacherously and wickedly sacrificed. Although a Frenchman, the bishop had devoted himself, body and soul, to the English, from whom he hoped to obtain the vacant archbishopric of Rouen. He declared that as the prisoner had been seized within his diocese, it was his duty to conduct the process against her; and when Jean de Ligny had taken from the English government the blood-money which had been raised in the subjected French provinces, she was yielded up to him. We know that Jeanne, on being told of the agreement by which she had been thus sold to her enemies, threw herself from the tower of Beaurevoir, and was taken up alive, but much injured. In her confession she admitted that she had acted against the counsel of her voices, and that she had thus been guilty of a sin. But she knew what she had to expect from the English, and she was not deceived;

for, when at the close of the year she was carried to Rouen, a decree of King Henry VI. was published, in which it was announced, that even if she should not be found guilty of the charges advanced against her, it was the royal will that she should be kept in custody.

We come now to the last tragical portion of this short and wonderful history. We see a girl, scarcely nineteen years of age, accused of heresy and witchcraft—the most horrible crimes with which any one could be charged in the Middle Ages—and this because she had done greater deeds than were ever accomplished by any other woman. Her case, moreover, was submitted to a high ecclesiastical tribunal, consisting of more than sixty members, many of whom, as, for instance, the canons of Rouen, were good patriots, and could only be induced through threats to take part in her trial. For two months the sittings and her examinations were continued. From the dark and narrow dungeon, in which she lay chained hand and foot, and where at night her body was fastened to her bed by a long heavy chain, she was dragged day by day before the stern assembly, which held its meetings in the chapel of the castle. The bishop who presided over the court, unrelentingly refused her earnest entreaties to be allowed to attend confession, and to hear mass. She was in future to be regarded as a poor sinner, or even as a sorceress, who had been led astray, and expelled from all communion with Christians. The present is not the place to describe this horrible process in its full significance. Let it suffice if we draw attention to the heroism which this poor weak girl manifested in the season of her extremest need, and which even exceeded her valour

in the field of battle. As she had not been allowed to have an advocate to conduct her defence, this poor peasant girl, who could neither read nor write, and who trusted solely to her own good cause, her innocence, and her clear understanding, was compelled to defend herself before these highly learned doctors, who, in the estimation of the world, were both wise and pious. She was made to swear that she would speak only the truth; and this she did most willingly in reference to everything that had befallen her from her childhood upwards. It was only in regard to her manifestations, and to the secret conversation which she had had with the Dauphin, that she exhibited any reserve; but these things she declared no human being should ever learn from her. She was especially upbraided for having worn masculine attire, and for having devoted herself to war, by which the learned doctors declared that she had brought contumely upon her own sex; but even here all her answers betrayed a touching purity. She declared that she had always loved to carry her standard far better than to wield a sword, which she had done to avoid the shedding of blood; and, as far as she remembered, she had never slain any one. When, however, they retorted that she had taken special delight in her masculine dress, she tried, with diffidence and modest shame, to make them understand that it was only in such attire as this that she had felt herself safe, even in her prison, where she dared not lay it aside for fear of her guard. She was also tried, with an almost devilish art, by many insidious questions; but the only answers which they elicited were expressions which bore testimony to the most spotless innocence, the purest faith, and the strictest

orthodoxy. Her tears, which had always flowed easily, proved to all who saw her how entirely womanly and maiden-like her nature still remained. After the sight of the rack, with its instruments of torture, had failed to move her—and after the poor girl had fallen into a dangerous illness, induced by the terrible bodily and mental suffering she had so long endured, but of which she was cured by careful nursing to endure a yet more terrible fate—she was condemned, on the ground that she had been familiar with fairies, and had practised witchcraft from her childhood, that she had led an immoral life in her youth, and had with shameful effrontery clothed herself in men's attire, and wielded the sword; and, lastly, that she had instigated the masses, through satanic agency, to revolt against the established government. A judgment of this kind could only be delivered by distorting her words and by shameful lies and inventions. There is not a syllable which can justify such a sentence in the protocol which the tribunal drew up, to their own shame, unconscious that it would enable posterity to judge of the entire proceedings. The judges did not even venture to condemn her to death; for when, on the 24th of May, the sentence was proclaimed in the public streets of Rouen, before the assembled population, the poor and heavily-tried victim was induced to recant on being brought face to face with her executioner, and his horrible instruments of torture. Weakened by the many endless torments which she had endured, and almost stupified, moreover, by the effect of the fresh spring air after her long confinement, she answered with a wild, vacant, and smiling face, "Yes!" when she was asked if she concurred in what

was stated in the paper that was read to her. Her long hair was then cut off, she was dressed in women's clothes, and the sentence was read which condemned her to captivity for life.

Her ultimate release was, however, near at hand. After a few days it was noised abroad that she had relapsed into heresy. Some persons had brought the dress she formerly wore and laid it by her, and to avoid the rudeness of her guards, and also, it was said, to protect herself from an English nobleman, she again put it on. Her Spiritual Manifestations, according to her frequent and open admission, had not left her either, and with a heroic determination to meet death she firmly declared that she knew nothing of that which was contained in the formula of her recantation. In the eyes of her judges nothing more was, therefore, now needed than the confirmation of the first sentence. On Wednesday, the 30th of May, the old market at Rouen was densely crowded before eight o'clock in the morning, by all classes of the citizens, including the high ecclesiastical tribunal, and the members of the English court and government. The condemned had at length been permitted to confess, and to receive the last consolatory offices of religion. When these were completed she entered upon her last and terrible journey, accompanied by several tender-hearted priests. To these sympathising friends she freely confessed that a death by fire terrified her beyond measure, and that she would far rather have lost her head on the block. She also asked them, "Where do you think that I shall be this evening?" "My daughter," replied one of her reverend companions, "dost thou not believe in God?" "Most assuredly!"

she answered, "and I have full confidence that He will receive me into His paradise." Clad in long white garments, and loaded with chains, the pale and girlish-looking victim stood once more before her judges to receive their final judgment. Then she fell upon her knees, and with scalding tears declared that she still adhered to the truth of all she had said. At her request a little cross was handed to her, which an English soldier had expeditiously put together from the fragments of a broken staff. When she was fastened to the stake, and the flames were beginning to rise towards her, she made a gesture with her hand to the pious monk who had refused to leave her side, beckoning to him to retreat from the heat of the fire. No sound was heard to escape from her lips save the words, "Maria, Jesus!" and then in a few moments all was over. When the fire was extinguished nothing was found but a heap of ashes, in which some persisted that they could still trace the once brave heart. All that remained of the poor victim was then speedily cast into the deep river, when the executioner himself declared that she, whose life he had destroyed, was in truth a meek and holy saint.

Thus ended the life of the Maid of Orleans—a creature as noble and pure-minded as any that the Church has ever canonized. Her foes had, indeed, satiated their vengeance in her death, but they could never again check the progress of the work which she had accomplished. It was she who gave the first impulse to the liberation of her king and country, and her life had now been sacrificed for both. It was not till years afterwards, when the English were driven from the soil of France,

that Charles VII., who had been so deeply implicated in the catastrophe of her death, but who had never raised a hand to help her, was impelled by the voice of public opinion to rescue her honour from the obloquy that had been cast upon it. In the year 1455 a process was tried, with the consent of Pope Calixtus III., and at the earnest request of the mother and brothers of Joan, to re-establish her fair fame, when all the witnesses who still survived were called upon to give their evidence, and the earlier sentence was reversed as contrary to justice. The acts and documents connected with these two processes are still extant, and in the eyes of the historian they must ever constitute the noblest justification of Joan Darc. The short account that we have here given of her life has been derived from a very small portion of the inestimable collection, which has only of late years been published in a complete form. When France had recovered her freedom, monuments were raised at Orleans and Rouen, and festivals instituted in honour of the national heroine. But now, when after the course of ages many direct traditions have either been lost or falsified, when—after Voltaire, in the eighteenth century, ventured uncondemned to vilify, with his revolting and prurient misrepresentations, the memory of the purest heroine of past times—and after the revolution had condemned her, together with everything appertaining to the idea of royalty, it has been reserved for the present age to comprehend her in her truthfulness and greatness, and again to seek to award to her the homage and the respect to which she is entitled. May France ever continue proud of the honour of ranking among the chiefest of her daughters Jeanne Darc, THE MAID OF ORLEANS!

XI.

DUKE HUMPHREY OF GLOUCESTER.

A FRAGMENT FROM THE LIFE OF A PRINCE IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

AMONG the sons of Edward III., all of whom were endowed with sufficient talent and ambition for attaining notoriety, not the least distinguished was the third in point of age, John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster. His great wealth and the possession of a degree of cultivation not common in his day rivetted the attention of his contemporaries. As the son-in-law of Peter the Cruel of Castile, he had laid claim to the crown that had been wrested from his father-in-law by a usurper, and had even attempted to defend it by force of arms. In the great and important events which occurred in the parliament of his own country he was regarded as the head of a special party; and while Chaucer, the first great English poet, rejoiced in his patronage, Wiclif, the earliest British reformer, endeavoured, not unsuccessfully, to secure protection under his powerful arm. In the midst of an age which was deeply stirred in every sphere of legislative and intellectual life, we find John of Gaunt taking an active share in all the great questions of his times.

As is so frequently the case, the grandson had inherited more of the spirit and qualities of his grandsire than of his immediate parent, although perhaps not entirely without being influenced by a later generation. We know that John's only legitimate son, Henry, did not entirely follow in the footsteps of his father; for he early placed himself at the head of the opposition against Richard II., and his careless and easy rule both in regard to church and state, and the idea which he formed of elevating himself to the royal dignity, was brought to a rapid and, in the estimation of many of his countrymen, a most undesirable realization. Henry IV. however, founded a new dynasty; and while he suppressed the fallen royal party with energy and sagacity, gave free scope to the orthodox clergy, in order as far as possible to eradicate all liberal evangelical tendencies, to which his father, for a time at least, had shown a decided leaning. We will here pass over his short though most important rule, and without pausing to speak of his three elder sons, who were all distinguished men, we will turn to the fourth and youngest, who seems to us to present a greater resemblance to John of Gaunt than any of the other grandsons of the duke.

The future Henry IV. was simply Earl of Derby, and had very probably never thought of bearing any but a ducal coronet. He had recently taken a zealous part in the first movement of the great barons against King Richard II.; and on the restoration of a more peaceful state of things he had entered, in the year 1390, upon a crusade, an undertaking for which this prince seems to have shown a special inclination throughout his life. At the head of a small and chosen band he had

set forth to take part with the Teutonic knights in Prussia in a great expedition which they were going to send against the heathen Lithuanians; and after the campaign he had wintered at Danzic, where at the beginning of the following year an English skipper brought him the news that his countess Maria, the heiress of the great Earl de Bohun, who had once been all-powerful on the Welsh marshes, had shortly before presented him with another son, who had received at the font the name of Humphrey. Nine years later Henry became king of England, and the throne was thus suddenly and unexpectedly supported by four promising heirs to the crown, whose several pretensions were determined by special acts of parliament, which were rendered necessary in consequence of the violent interruption that had lately disturbed the regular order of succession.

We hear little of Humphrey, the youngest of these princes, until he reached his twenty-third year, and it is only from subsequent events that we can draw any conclusions regarding the manner in which his youth was spent. At this period, however, during the parliament of the year 1414, his brother King Henry V. conferred upon him the titles of Earl of Pembroke and Duke of Gloucester; and under the latter name he took part in the following year in the first campaign against France, and was present at the glorious victory of Agincourt. It is related that in the last terrible and decisive attack which the English infantry—consisting of the valiant peasantry of Lincoln and Derbyshire, who were only armed with bows and battle-axes, and who fought under the leadership of their heroic king—made against the mail-clad knights of France, amounting to three times their

number, Duke Humphrey, like many other noble lords, was wounded and struck down, and only saved from death by his brother the king, who, fighting with the courage of a lion, defended his body by standing with his right leg across him.

After having taken part in the most brilliant feat of arms of that age, Gloucester participated equally in many other scarcely less memorable events of that victorious, but unhappily too short reign. His wounds had long been healed when, on the 30th of April in the year 1416, he was called upon, in his office of Constable of Dover Castle and Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, to receive with becoming state a guest of exalted rank. This distinguished visitor was Sigismund, King of the Romans and King of Hungary, who had been intrusted by the high council, then sitting at Constance, with full powers to settle peace in the kingdoms of western Christendom, in order that they might combine to put down the scandal with which the schism in the pontifical court had filled Europe, and after these disturbances had been allayed, rise unanimous against the Mohammedan foes in the east. The ship which bore the imperial visitor to England had made the passage across the channel in five hours. The standards and pennants at the mast head were fluttering gaily in the breeze, the trumpets were sounding, the knights of the neighbouring counties were drawn up along the beach, well mounted and glittering in their bright armour, when Prince Humphrey advanced at the head of several noblemen and dignitaries of the court towards the vessel which bore the successor of Charlemagne. Spurring his horse into the water up to its middle, and holding his drawn sword in his hand, the

Duke of Gloucester demanded of Sigismund, in the name of his brother and king, that during his presence in England he should not attempt to execute any act of sovereign power or jurisdiction. It was only after Sigismund had given a promise to this effect, which does not seem to have been quite superfluous, considering the act of which the King had lately been guilty at Paris, that the foreign prince was permitted to set his foot on English ground, or to receive the honours which were awaiting his arrival. It is a singular circumstance that Duke Humphrey should have had to take a similar marine ride in the course of the same year; for when a conference was arranged to be held in October between the two kings, Sigismund and Henry, and Duke John of Burgundy, at Calais, and the latter prince refused to agree to the meeting unless hostages were given for his safety, Gloucester was obliged to give himself up to the Burgundians as a security for their duke during the continuance of the conference; the place selected for this transfer being at the boundaries, which run through the water at Gravelines. Humphrey seems also to have accompanied the King of the Romans on his journey home as far as Dort. In the campaign which was opened in 1417, with even greater success against the French, Gloucester was again near the person of his royal brother. We do not, however, frequently hear of him in the annals that have come down to us of those days, and the history of the times records no valiant deeds in battle, and no special act of valour on the part of this Lancastrian prince. It would almost seem as if he had temporarily withdrawn from the theatre of public affairs, and already begun in his own home, and in secret, to enter

upon that course of intrigue which laid him open in future years to just animadversion.

His brother, the victorious Henry V., the conqueror and heir of France, had died prematurely, to the great sorrow of the nation, on the 31st of August, 1422, and had left his throne to an infant, nine months old, who, as Henry VI., was *de facto* monarch of both countries. Gloucester now showed himself in a two-fold character, and like his grandfather during the minority of Richard II., he began forcibly to interfere in the existing order of the State, and like him he endeavoured to secure influence and power by marriage, which in his case was made with a foreigner. He had the misfortune of having allied himself to a woman who was the object of scandal both at home and abroad, and it would almost appear as if she had been selected by the prince for that very reason.

Jacqueline, or Jacobea of Bavaria, was the descendant and heiress of Margaret, the Empress of Louis IV., and possessed as her own patrimony the northern and southern parts of the Netherlands, the counties of Holland, and Hainault. Although only twenty-one years of age, she had already been twice married. Her first husband, John, the Dauphin of France, died soon after their marriage; and her second husband, Duke John IV. of Brabant, had been so grossly outraged by this passionate and unprincipled woman, that, after a very few years, a reconciliation between the two could no longer be thought of. These matrimonial dissensions kindled into flame many inflammable political elements, which had long been smouldering in almost every part of the Netherlands. In Holland, where the emperor Sigismund had refused to recognise Jacqueline on the ground, that as a

fief of the empire, this principality could not be held by a woman, the country was threatened with complete disorganization in the struggle between the two national factions of the Hoeks and the Kabeljaus. The Duke of Brabant adhered to the former of these, and his wife to their rivals; but the duke had been instigated by his shrewd cousin, Duke Philip of Burgundy, to refuse to give up his claim to the management of his wife's patrimony, more especially in Hainault, although she had chosen to leave him. Philip was well aware that a reconciliation between this couple was no longer possible, and that John of Brabant was an effeminate weak man, the very last who would ever be likely to rouse himself to any permanent exertion, and he, therefore, already foresaw that all the dominions of the Netherlands would necessarily revert within no very long period to him as the lord of Flanders. In the meanwhile, Jacqueline, on the strength of a bull of the deposed Pope Benedict XIII., had divorced herself from her husband, and after making fruitless attempts to reinstate herself in Holland and Hainault, had turned to England for support. It would appear that it was the knight Lewis Robessart, a friend and confidant of the Duke of Gloucester, who, in the year 1422, conducted her to this country. Henry V. made her a monthly allowance of £100 sterling during her stay in England; and it is probable that she had already become the wife of Gloucester, during the king's life-time, although no doubt without his knowledge. There were very few persons even in England who considered her marriage with the Duke of Brabant as illegal, on the ground of near consanguinity, or who attached any weight to a bull that had been granted by

a pope who was only recognized in one small section of Spain, and who had recently been deprived, in the most solemn manner, by the Council of Constance, of his assumed dignity.

This did not, however, prevent Duke Humphrey from assuming the claims of his wife as his own, and as soon as the infant Henry VI. was proclaimed king, he endeavoured to enforce them by the help of his position in England. Instead, therefore, of disinterestedly supporting his elder brother, Duke John of Bedford, who was contending with great sagacity and valour against ever increasing difficulties, both at home and abroad, he set up the most senseless opposition, both in the council and in parliament; and trusting to the goodwill of the great mass of the people, thwarted in every way those who were striving vigorously and honestly to carry out the policy of Henry IV. and Henry V. as the indispensable means of upholding the reigning dynasty. Gloucester was, moreover, at this time making a foolish attempt against the Netherlands, by which he embroiled the English government in France with the only important ally whom they possessed in the Low Countries. We will now briefly consider the course of events that had led to these results.

Henry V., on his deathbed, had entrusted to his elder brother, John, Duke of Bedford, the regency of France, together with a superintendence of the affairs of England, while the young Duke of Gloucester was appointed Protector. A few weeks afterwards these enactments were ratified, and acquired the force of law at a sitting of the English privy council, and hence it was made evident that the actual power rested with this body. In

vain did Duke Humphrey, moved by ambition and an eager love of power, rebel against this species of dependence, urging that he had already, on previous occasions, acted as his brother's representative without being subjected to any further supervision. He was equally unsuccessful in his endeavours to secure the support of parliament to the protests which he had presented at the opening of the session, which took place a few days later. The lords and commons were agreed that he should not be proclaimed as governor or regent of the kingdom, but that he should merely hold the title of Protector and Defender of England, and that solely for the time that his brother was occupied in France. They made him clearly understand that he was by no means the next in succession to the crown, and that they were thoroughly well acquainted with his designs. Bitter was his indignation when he found that his powers scarcely went beyond that of bearing the title of president of the privy council, signing his name at the head of the other members, and, at most, having the direction of the royal parks, and the power of distributing the patronage of the church as he liked.

It was from such fetters as these that he now tried to emancipate himself by means of a foreign enterprise. Gloucester and his restless consort, Jacqueline, left England in the month of October, 1424, without the concurrence of Bedford, or the knowledge of the English council of state, and, at the head of 5,000 English troops, they landed at Calais, and proceeded straight through French Flanders to Hainault. In the month of December the countess recovered possession of her own patrimony, but she was only permitted for a short

time to enjoy her success. The Duke of Burgundy, who was not idle, showed a strong inclination to go over from the side of the English to that of their opponents, and he induced the much-aggrieved Duke of Brabant to enter into a treaty with him, the object of which was to expel his faithless wife. Gloucester, however, in accordance with the manners of the times, challenged him to single combat, and on this occasion, strange to say, his own brother, the Duke of Bedford, agreed to act as umpire. We do not definitely see the motives which could have induced Gloucester to return to London in the spring of 1425, considering the dangerous position of public affairs in Hainault. Contemporaneous narratives record that he was obliged to make preparations and take various preliminary steps in anticipation of the meditated duel, and they bear testimony to the great tenderness with which he parted from Jacqueline. We should rather conjecture that he had grown heartily tired of her by that time, and that he was especially anxious to promote his own intrigues at home. He undertook nothing in earnest to avert the catastrophe which he himself had been the means of bringing upon the Netherlands. And thus the Brabanters threw themselves unchecked into Hainault, blockaded Mons, and even as early as July constrained the garrison to give up their royal mistress, and to evacuate this stronghold. In the capitulation, which was now drawn up, the countess was obliged to resign herself to her fate, and remain quietly at Ghent, in the safe keeping of Duke Philip of Burgundy, until the decision of Pope Martin V., regarding her affairs, could be obtained. The pontiff, however, anathematized her

last marriage with the English prince, while he objected most strongly to the meditated duel. A few months later the quarrel became even more complicated in consequence of the escape of this eccentric princess from her prison. She had succeeded in eluding the vigilance of her guards, and disguised in male attire, had embarked in a vessel at Antwerp, and afterwards entered Holland. She no sooner showed herself at the Hague, than her adherents, the Hoeks, joyfully flocked around her, while her opponents did not rest till they had brought the Burgundians to their aid. For nearly three years Jacqueline endeavoured, with ever-varying success, to maintain this, her last province, against the powerful forces of Duke Philip, by which she was surrounded on every side. At first Gloucester afforded her some help, for 500 Englishmen, under Lord Fitzwalter, undertook to fight for her cause, but in time the pecuniary supplies, which had hitherto been given in the name of Henry VI. to his dear and well-beloved aunt, the Duchess of Gloucester, were more and more sparingly granted, and very soon she is even spoken of in the grant under the far less courteous appellation of the "Lady of Gloucester." At this time, when John of Brabant was dead, and Duke Humphrey had long lost his interest in Jacqueline and her concerns, the miserable policy of England had come to a complete standstill in the Netherlands, and, in 1428, the countess was obliged, a second time, to submit to the power of the Duke of Burgundy. In the treaty which was signed on the 3rd of July, she herself declares that she has never been the legal wife of the English prince; she pledges herself not to marry again; and recognises Duke Philip as Ruwaert of

Holland during her life, and acknowledges him as the heir, at her death, of all her possessions. Yet, notwithstanding all this, the faithless woman broke her word after a very few years, and, by throwing herself into the arms of a nobleman of the country, named Jan van Borselen, merely accelerated the termination of her career. In the year 1433 she was compelled to surrender all her states to Philip, after he had seized upon her lover, and threatened him with the extreme penalty of the law; and on the 8th of October, 1436, her agitated life was brought to an early close. This remarkable princess presents some evil traits not unlike those which distort the representations which have come down to us of Mary Stuart. Yet it was for the sake of this woman that Humphrey had suffered himself to be led so far astray as to irritate an already wavering ally, and to contribute, by his conduct, to give to the most powerful vassal of the French crown an accession of power and territory, by which he acquired a degree of political and commercial independence, which proved of incalculable detriment and significance in regard to England.

Without owning a foot of land either in Hainault or Holland, the Lancastrian prince proudly named himself Humphrey, by the grace of God, the son, brother, and uncle of kings, Duke of Gloucester, Count of Hainault, Holland, and Flanders, Earl of Pembroke, Lord of Friesland, Lord High Chamberlain of England, and Protector and Defender of the Anglican Church and Realm; and, what is more, he made repeated attempts to substantiate his claims to these high-sounding titles. For a long time, however, he had been restrained by a man who stood in his way like a tower of strength. Cardinal

Beaufort, in accordance with Shakespeare's striking representation, has been generally considered as an odious impersonation of monstrous avarice and boundless ambition; and from this point of view he has been regarded as the disturbing agent in all the party struggles of those times. A glance at the historical materials referring to that epoch is, on the contrary, sufficient to show that this prelate maintained the Lancastrian policy in a conservative and patriotic spirit, while Gloucester was perpetually engaged in senseless intrigues to undermine it. Henry Beaufort was the second son of John of Gaunt, by Catherine Swinford, who, after having been his mistress, became the third wife of the duke, and he was consequently the uncle of Gloucester and his brothers. He, like the rest of his mother's children, had been subsequently legitimatized, although expressly excluded from all pretensions to the crown. His wealth and distinguished position were some compensation for this exclusion, for Henry had been early advanced in the church, and his nomination to the richly-endowed see of Winchester gave him paramount influence both in the church and state. He had shown special predilection in former times for the then Prince of Wales, who afterwards became Henry V., and there is still a tradition in Oxford that the young prince studied under his direction in Queen's College; there are also obscure indications that, in the differences which had once existed between the light-hearted young prince and his suffering and fretful father, Beaufort took the part of his favourite nephew. Nor did Henry pass him by in his will, for he expressly appointed him as one of the guardians of his infant son; and, as a

member of the privy council, Beaufort took part in the settlement of all great questions, and was even for a time invested with the dignity of chancellor. His colossal fortune, which he understood admirably well both how to manage and how to spend, and whose augmentation seems, indeed, to have been the special joy of his heart, was repeatedly placed by him at the disposal of the government in their increasing embarrassments. He had already advanced £30,000 sterling to Henry V., and the regency speedily became indebted to him for a similar sum. The proud bearing of the prelate, his speculations, and his energetic conduct on many occasions, raised against him, as may easily be supposed, both detractors and enemies. As he was often compelled to express himself depreciatingly in reference to his nephew Gloucester, on account of his ambitious views in regard to the government, his uncanonical union with Jacqueline, and his proceedings in the Netherlands, it is not to be wondered that both should have been violently opposed to one another, and that each should have striven to secure supremacy for himself. The bishop, like so many prelates of his day, without being endowed by any actual spiritual dignity, was gifted with much political foresight and talent, and he consequently appears before us as the spokesman of the nobles, who were almost all sincere adherents of the Lancastrian party; while the duke, on the other hand, who was not trusted by the upper classes, sought adherents among the populace. Among his partizans the most enthusiastic were the citizens of London, whom he understood how to win over by his engaging condescension, and by his arts of flattery.

While Humphrey was engaged in his expedition against Hainault, Beaufort was for the second time invested with the chancellorship. He availed himself of the absence of his restless nephew to throw a strong and trustworthy garrison into the Tower, hoping from this strong point to be able to hold in check the unruly spirits of the metropolis. Scarcely, however, had Gloucester made his sudden and unexpected reappearance in England when the Londoners, with the lord mayor at their head, took up arms in his cause. They did not, indeed, venture to seize upon the Tower, but they crossed the bridge, meaning to exercise their courage by an attack on the bishop's palace on the opposite bank of the river. Beaufort, however, had not shown any remissness in providing for their reception, for he had defended all the approaches with knights and archers, and posted sentinels in all the neighbouring houses. For a time the contending parties maintained a threatening attitude, and it was only after a prolonged mediation on the part of the clergy that these eager combatants could be induced to separate. The anger which possessed the minds of the two princes was by no means allayed, as we see from a letter which the Bishop of Winchester wrote to the Duke of Bedford, who was then in France, and which bears the date of the 30th October, 1425, the day after this occurrence; for he begs him to hasten back to England to settle their strife, lest the country should be plunged into the horrors of a civil war. "Such a brother," he says, "ye have here; God make him a good man!"

However difficult it must have been to Bedford to leave France in the grave circumstances in which the country was then placed, he did not long delay; for

if the English conquests abroad were to be maintained, it was imperative to secure peace in England. The regent, therefore, set forth in the beginning of the new year for London, in order to effect a reconciliation between Gloucester and Beaufort, and to dispose those disaffected spirits to the prosecution of one great aim. His plan was to endeavour, once for all, to bring his brother to a better state of feeling before the matter was brought before parliament. With this view, he drew up a special commission under the Archbishop of Canterbury, in which Gloucester was urged to explain his causes of dissatisfaction with the chancellor, some days before the opening of parliament. Gloucester preferred, however, laying before the house his bill of accusation against his uncle, but he soon perceived, to his no small vexation, that the lords and commons did not hold the same views as himself. Beaufort's dignified conduct left him no alternative but to offer him his hand in pledge of amity, saying, as he did so, "Fair uncle, since you so declare yourself such a man as you say, I am right glad that it is so, and for such I take you." This was not said, however, in full sincerity of heart. Bedford appears to have remained a whole year in England, with the view of allaying the differences which were already then beginning to exert so injurious an influence on the position of affairs in France. When, before his departure, he voluntarily renewed the oath to maintain the regency as it had been established during the minority of Henry VI., his brother kept aloof from the meeting, and by representing himself to be ill, endeavoured to evade a similar pledge. And he said, moreover, loud enough to be heard by all around him, "Let my brother

govern as him lusteth, whiles he is in this land; after his going over into France I will govern as me seemeth good."

The next few years, in which England reaped the bitter fruits of this ambitious foolhardiness, made apparent the dissensions that had been fomented by Gloucester. Blow now followed rapidly upon blow. The extraordinary achievements of the Maid of Orleans, the rising of the French against their foreign conquerors, the untimely death of the Duke of Bedford, after this brave man had made almost superhuman efforts to counteract the troubles that were gathering round him, and the open defection of Burgundy, were events which, in less than twenty years, brought about the thorough expulsion of the English from France. If we turn to the consideration of the conduct which Duke Humphrey pursued in relation to these matters, we shall find him once more at variance with his uncle, the Bishop of Winchester, who was now elevated to the dignity of cardinal. This new Romish title afforded sufficient grounds to instigate the Commons against him; and the old statutes against the encroachments of the pontifical court were now revived, for the sake of removing this English prelate from the privy council and from all participation in the affairs of the government, at the very time when he had raised troops at his own expense, which, although they did not indeed fulfil the purpose for which they were intended, and proceed to Bohemia to fight against the Hussites, contributed not a little to check the first energetic rising of the French under Jeanne Darc. A charge of high treason was, in the meanwhile, impending over the head of the cardinal,

who, however, again succeeded in averting the danger, when he returned, with the young king, from the continent to England, where the increasing embarrassments of the state led to his being welcomed, on account of his great wealth, as a national benefactor in the hour of need.

We once more meet the Duke of Bedford in England, and this time shortly before his death. He had again come over to restore peace and quiet to the land; but he was at the same time compelled to defend himself against some spiteful accusations, which, without doubt, emanated from Gloucester. Even then he would not displace this disturber of the peace from the position that had been granted to him; but he endeavoured to put a stop to his injurious interference with the embarrassed finances of the state. With bitter vexation Humphrey saw himself obliged to follow the noble example of Bedford, when he voluntarily renounced his allowance of £1,000; and he revenged himself upon him by the most injurious and malevolent expressions in regard to those measures which his brother had been indefatigable in carrying out for the vigorous prosecution of the war. It was not till after Bedford had been laid in his grave at Rouen, that Gloucester, whose only participation in the war had hitherto consisted in mere talk, (in which he indulged, however, in the hope that he might influence the minds of the multitude to his own advantage,) again personally took part in any deed of arms. The Burgundians advanced against Calais in the year 1436, in the hope that they might boldly wrest from the enemy this ancient and renowned conquest of Edward III.; but at the very moment in which they thought themselves secure of their conquest,

an English squadron appeared under the command of the duke, who arrogantly assumed the title of Earl of Flanders, and with all expedition the assailants made off without even having drawn their swords against their opponents. The English prince, however, did not wait to gather fresh laurels on this occasion; for he returned in haste to England, where we now find him constantly pursuing the old and tortuous paths by which he thought he might attain independent power. While the cardinal stood firm and resolute at the head of his party, who were striving to bring about a public accord and an honourable peace with France, Gloucester was urgent for war, without having ever seriously made any preparations for it; and to his incessant intrigues must be ascribed the ruin which, after its downfall in France, was now threatening the rule of the house of Lancaster in England.

It happened, strangely enough, that, as in past years, a woman was now again destined to exert a deep and fatal influence on the life and history of Gloucester, and to share in no inconsiderable degree in the strange catastrophe which we are about to describe. In the expedition into Hainault, which took place in the year 1424, there was, in the suite of the countess Jacqueline, a young lady, named Eleonor Cobham, the daughter of Reginald Lord Cobham, of Sterborough. We do not hear that her charms were especially attractive, and her reputation was certainly none of the best, even at that time. In June, 1425, she returned to England with Duke Humphrey, and it was very soon no secret in London that she was living with him as his mistress. Not long afterwards, however, he married her; indifferent to the fact that his union with Jacqueline had been hal-

lowed by a priest's blessing. The Countess of Holland was, at that time, faithlessly and obstinately contending with her enemies. The marriage with Eleonor gave rise, however, even among the partisans of the duke, to loud expressions of discontent. It is related that, on one occasion, a number of worthy London dames carried a petition up to the house of lords, in order to express to this highest tribunal of the land their sense of the disgrace and infamy that attached to a prince of the blood, who allowed his own wedded wife to remain deserted in Holland, while he, contrary to God's commandment, had united himself to a person of evil repute. But what availed such representations as these? It was evident that Gloucester had a special inclination for ladies of exceptional character; and his own volatility and want of principle had long made him averse to a marriage such as befitted his rank. His influence at court and in the government was still strong enough to secure for Eleonor the privilege of being acknowledged as his wife. King Henry VI. treated her for years as such, and sent gracious presents on the new year's day "to the Lady of Gloucester," as she was now also called. This Lady of Gloucester was, however, destined to experience a most terrible reverse, and to bring upon the duke irretrievable disgrace at the very moment when he had begun to anticipate a successful issue to the plans he had meditated against his hated uncle; for the efforts to arrange a peace, in which the cardinal had been engaged, and the liberation of the King of Scotland and Duke of Orleans from their English captivity, would, he flattered himself, supply strong grounds for a new charge of high treason against the prelate.

A charge of this kind was actually in contemplation, and Gloucester was again appealing to the memory of his renowned brother, Henry V., and trying by his outcry for war to circumvent the policy of the cardinal, when, in the year 1441, a report, entirely in harmony with the feelings and spirit of the age, was spread in regard to a strange proceeding, which speedily filled the city and country with dismay and horror. Among the many learned astrologers and adepts in the black arts, with whom the Duke of Gloucester, in his insatiable thirst for knowledge, took pleasure in associating, there was a person named Roger Bolingbroke, who had received the ordination of the church. This man was now suddenly taken up on the serious charge of having, in common with a companion and associate of his own, endeavoured to compass the death of the king by incantations and similar arts of sorcery. Two nights after the Sunday, when the accused, in accordance with the prescribed usage, had done penance at the pillory, the Lady Eleonor suddenly escaped from her residence, and took refuge in the sanctuary at the abbey of Westminster. It was then rumoured that she also was deeply implicated in similar acts of high treason; while Bolingbroke forthwith confessed that he had been instigated by her, to try and ascertain her future destiny, by means of magical arts, for her husband and she stood so near the throne, that she thought she might, perhaps, ascertain, by means of supernatural powers, whether they were destined themselves to occupy it. A sorceress, known as the witch of Eye, was also taken up, who had many years before been condemned on account of similar unprincipled proceedings. This person was also

believed to have assisted the Lady of Gloucester in ensnaring the duke, her husband, into her power by means of philtres. This was probably the popular, or rather the official interpretation of these extraordinary revelations, and was intended, in some degree, to remove from the duke the grave suspicion which must necessarily otherwise have fallen upon him also. A tribunal, composed of ecclesiastical and criminal judges, and organized after the manner of an inquisition, charged her with having caused an effigy of the king to be made in wax, and to be exposed to the action of a slow fire, with many secret ceremonies, (such as those which Horace describes, and which were practised at many other places in the middle ages,) in the idea that the bodily health of the king might decay, as the wax melted. If we remember that Henry VI. never attained a perfect state of development, either of mind or body, and that he soon afterwards sank into a state of imbecility; and if, farther, we bear in mind that in that age, when the physical sciences were still in their infancy, the mysterious powers of nature were appealed to by the weak and superstitious for the elucidation of the secrets of the heart, as well as for the pretended investigation of the future, we need not wonder that such follies should have been punished with the severest penalties awarded to high treason. The accomplices of the Lady Eleonor died a horrible death like the commonest criminals; and although her life was saved, out of respect to the duke, she was not suffered to escape from doing penance, in a manner that was alike humiliating to herself and to the man who had made her his wife. The chronicles of the city of London vie with one another in giving the most minute

description of the manner in which Eleonor Cobham was brought one Monday morning in a barge from Westminster to the Temple wharf, bare-headed and bare-footed, clad in the white penance-sheet, and carrying a burning torch in her hand. As soon as she landed, she was received by the lord mayor and the other civic authorities, and conducted up Fleet-street, through the dense and gaping crowd, who followed the strange procession to St. Paul's church, where she made her confession at the different altars, and extinguished her torch. On the Wednesday and Friday she was led in a similar procession to the other churches of the city, after which she was given in charge to Sir Thomas Stanley, a tried knight, and the ancestor of a distinguished noble family. The remainder of her life was passed in the strict custody of this knight, first in Chester castle, then at Kenilworth, and, lastly, in the Isle of Man. Thenceforth she disappeared from the history of the life of the duke, who never recovered from the disgrace which she had brought upon him, nor ever fully rallied from this severe blow. How far he was culpable in regard to Eleonor's first participation in these events it is difficult to determine from the materials at our disposition; but there are other, and, undoubtedly, nobler features in his character, to which we shall presently refer, which lead us to conjecture that he was implicated in these events.

In the meantime, however, the generation of men had changed in England with the times; and although Gloucester endeavoured to take advantage of the good will of the populace, which he had not yet wholly lost, in order to excite resistance against the national foe, he was as

much removed from the theatre of public affairs as the aged Cardinal Beaufort. In the year 1444 the weak-minded king had been married to Margaret of Anjou, whose unbending and harsh spirit has left indelible traces in the history of England. It was thought that by this marriage the way might be opened for an honourable peace with France. The Earl of Suffolk, who had boldly taken upon himself to conclude the requisite treaties, must be regarded as the prosecutor and continuer of the cardinal's policy, and his government was strictly based upon the hierarchico-aristocratic principles of Henry V. We are ignorant of the individual details, or the special reasons which influenced Suffolk and Queen Margaret, whose youthful ambition for the first time found scope for its aspirations, in making their rapid and crushing attack upon Gloucester. But there is little doubt that, in accordance with his nature, he had persevered in his old intrigues; although, in this case, he seems to have fallen unsuspiciously into the snare that was laid for him.

On the 10th of February, 1447, a parliament was summoned to meet in the spacious abbey of Bury St. Edmunds, a favourite place of abode of the king. Duke Humphrey did not arrive till the 18th, when he took up his residence, with his not very numerous retinue, in the hospitium for pilgrims. The distribution of troops along the roads, and the strict watch that was kept over all the approaches to the king's place of residence, should have warned him to be upon his guard, as some one was undoubtedly aimed at by these precautions. On the very day of his arrival, the Dukes of Somerset and Buckingham, together with the constable, Lord

Beaumont, came to his lodgings at noon, to arrest him on a charge of high treason. All minds were anxiously awaiting the trial, which was, without delay, to be opened before the peers, when, on the afternoon of the 23d, he was found dead in his bed, on the door of his closed apartment being broken open. The body showed no signs of external injury, and the manner of his death must ever remain a mystery.

Contemporaneous witnesses differ in the most remarkable manner in regard to this point. Among Humphrey's adherents in London, the report was naturally spread that he had been murdered; and some persons even declared that he had been found smothered under feather-beds, as had happened fifty years before in the case of his great-uncle, a former Duke of Gloucester; whilst others again affirmed that he had suffered the same horrible death as the unfortunate Edward II. The violent mode of his arrest, and the resolute character of the dreaded Suffolk, lent no slight degree of colouring to such an assumption. It would seem, too, as if in accordance with a preconceived purpose, which was verified by the results, that on the same day—the 18th of February—a considerable number of the dependents and servants of the Duke of Gloucester were arrested on his estate at Greenwich, and, by a summary proceeding, at once brought to the very foot of the gallows. They were accused of the serious crime of having audaciously advanced, with arms in their hands, towards Bury St. Edmunds, to dethrone the king, and place Humphrey of Gloucester on the throne, and to liberate his wife, Eleonor Cobham, from her prison. The circumstance that the accused were pardoned, militates indeed against

the truth of the charge; nor must it be forgotten that the duke undoubtedly fell into the snare that was laid for him without suspecting the danger which he incurred; and that, moreover, he had not come direct from Greenwich, but had arrived at Bury from his Wiltshire stronghold of Devizes. The poor, weak-minded king constantly persisted in declaring that his once loved uncle had aimed at his life and crown, and he would never permit parliament to clear the memory of the deceased from these charges; nor was it without difficulty that permission could be obtained to bury the body, in a manner becoming its rank, in the abbey of St. Albans.

These circumstances do not, however, tend to prove that the duke met with a violent death. Those who were specially friendly to him, and who have handed down to us the history of Prince Humphrey, whom they style "the good" Duke of Gloucester—no doubt in consequence of his affable demeanour to the citizens of London, and of his resistance to the justly obnoxious form of government as it then existed,—are all unanimous in ascribing his rapid end to the grief and vexation occasioned by the sudden and harsh mode of his arrest. We possess, moreover, the testimony of another witness, which, although indirect, appears to us definitely to clear his opponents from the suspicion of murder. It is doubly important, because it moreover throws a strong light upon the whole character of this prince, in which dark and bright traits are strangely blended together. At the age of forty-five, and consequently eleven years before his death, the duke requested his physician, Gilbert Kymer (the same person who was afterwards employed by the parliament to draw up a report of the

imbecility of Henry VI.), to examine the condition of his bodily health, and to inform him of his opinion. It was probably less from the fear of approaching death than from that eagerness for knowledge which seems to have attracted him alike to good and evil things, that the duke was led to inquire into the character of the diagnosis, which proved to be most alarming. We refrain from giving the repulsive details of this report; suffice it to remark that the physician, with true scientific perception, considering the time, had no dependence on the health of his noble patient, as he found the internal organs to have been thoroughly vitiated by immoderate excesses, while his nerves had been injured by over-excitement of mind and body. What an insight does this afford us into the wild unbridled passions by which the duke was swayed, and what a light does it throw upon the tendencies and disposition of his mind! We scarcely need any further testimony to show that so corrupt a body might suddenly be stricken down under the effect of a violent agitation of mind. Eleven years before his death a wise physician had thus detected his condition, although he probably was not able to secure attention to the warning which he gave him. The portrait of this prince, which has been preserved in a painted window of the parish church of Greenwich, exhibits the features of a man who has grown old and debilitated before his time.

It seems almost a contradiction if, after giving such traits as these of the life of Gloucester, we were to close our remarks with a few words of praise. Let us not forget, however, that his foibles and errors closely verge upon the most noble qualities. Even his pleasure in alchemy and magic, as well as his desire to understand

the internal structure of his own body, had its origin in a genuine scientific tendency, which was as vast and unbounded as were his passions. In an age of change, and of transition to a new and better state of things than any that had hitherto been known, when we cease to meet with the fantastic and rudely vigorous forms of the middle ages, and have not yet begun to encounter the daring spirit of modern times which seizes upon the reality of things, the Duke of Gloucester stands forth, almost alone in his own country, as a man whose aspirations and conceptions carried him far beyond the age in which he lived. Folly and genuine wisdom, superstition and enlightenment, are all blended together in his mind. In a work by Sir Thomas More, we meet with an amusing account of the manner in which Duke Humphrey, who had long ceased to believe in miracles and legends, once, when he was at St. Alban's—a place with which he seems to have been often associated—unmasked with sharp ridicule a begging impostor, who had pretended that he had recovered his sight through the agency of the relics. Like his grandfather, who had taken a sincere pleasure in the friendship of the great poet Chaucer, Gloucester was at all times ready to gather round him all the poetical and inquiring spirits of England. Unlike John of Gaunt, he lived moreover at the period of the first dawn of a genuine classical learning, whose germs had been fostered on the soil of antiquity, and whose fresh shoots had been transplanted, more especially through the agency of the council of Basle, into the states that had sprung up in the north of Europe during the middle ages. It would appear that there still exists at Vienna a manuscript letter which was addressed by

Gloucester to this great assembly of the church. The genial breath of Italian literature had, therefore, undoubtedly reached him also; and, with all his characteristic peculiarities, he must be regarded as one of the earliest cultivators of this learning in England. It is impossible to say by what means he acquired this knowledge, and whether it was due to his occasional residences in France and the Netherlands, or whether this newly developed mental taste had been engendered in his mind independently of time and place. Certain it is that no soil could have been found more ready for its reception than the eager mind of the duke. But as it is everywhere difficult in a first crop to separate the weeds from the corn, so we also find that the evils and vices of the school of the Italian literature of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, are most prominently brought to view in this remarkable scion of the house of Lancaster.

At the court, which he was wont to keep in his character of Protector, in the metropolis, where he lived at Baynard Castle on the river, or when he resided without ceremony at one of his numerous country houses, many people of foreign descent, of the strangest character, and of very widely different worth, must have met together. Here, for example, were some of those ecclesiastics who, as we have seen, were cultivators of the physical sciences, although physics and chemistry were still included by them in the domain of the black art and of sorcery. They must have lately heard of those discoveries which are themselves sufficient to mark an era, and by which those two phases of life, peace and war, were destined to be completely metamorphosed, for they must have been familiar with the ex-

periments and writings of their great and incomparable countryman, Roger Bacon, who appears before us like some English Faust of the thirteenth century, half as a magician and half as a natural philosopher. This was an age, too, in which successive governments granted eagerly-demanded patents for the discovery of the philosopher's stone, which was to convert common materials into precious gold. Men who entered into such pursuits as these enjoyed the special favour of their exalted patron, and appealed so openly to his protection that their arts can scarcely have been carried to the length of criminality without his participation.

He moreover gathered round him the few Englishmen who possessed any literary reputation at that day; as, for instance, John of Whethamstead, the abbot of St. Alban's, who, in his turgid and vapid Chronicle, speaks with warmth of the prince, to whose memory he erected a monument in his abbey, by the side of the proto-martyr of England; and William Botoner, another historiographer of the time, who, like a genuine son of that age, occupied himself with chronological, heraldic, astronomical, and even medical, investigations. We naturally, also, meet with John Lydgate, the court-poet of those days, a monk of the abbey of Bury St. Edmund's, who, without possessing the slightest approach to poetical talent, or a trace of Chaucer's genius, nevertheless poured forth a flood of verses, of which the greater number have, fortunately, never been printed, and which were composed in the metrical form that had been adopted by the poet of the Canterbury Tales. The duke is said to have induced him to translate a book of Boccaccio into English, and he received his full share

of the flatteries and adulation which Lydgate seems to have had at hand on every occasion, whether public or private. The duke's ambition must have been fully satisfied with the notice which he received in the encomium on the coronation of Henry VI. at Paris, in which the poet says :—

> "Duc of Gloucester men this prince calle ;
> And notwithstanding his state and dignyte,
> His corage never doth appalle
> To studie in booke of antiquite ;
> Therein he hath so gret felicite
> Vertuousli hymself to occupie
> Off vinous slouth to have the maistrie."

Lydgate, no doubt, begged with some success for "His empty purse," when he sent this poem to Gloucester.

It was not, however, only the writings of the old Florentine novelist that Duke Humphrey loved so well, for he also extended a friendly welcome to the first learned Italians who came to England, more especially to a native of Forli, who had followed the practice, which was by no means uncommon amongst his countrymen, of adopting the name of some celebrated Roman classic, and had styled himself Titus Livius. Although a poor man, as he himself tells us, his love of travelling had led him to wander forth in search of some princely protector, who would know how to esteem and reward his talents. Such a patron he found in the Duke of Gloucester, by whom he was induced to write the life and deeds of the renowned Henry V., and the work he composed is by no means deficient in merit. Humphrey rewarded the author by nominating him his court-poet and orator, and he even induced the king to grant him an act of naturalization in England. The duke also

stood in intimate relations with other more celebrated Italian literati. There is a memorable notice on record that Leonardo Aretino, one of the ornaments of the learned court of the old Cosmo de Medici, and a man who was not only distinguished for the good Latin which he wrote, but who also understood Greek, had dedicated to the prince his translation of the "Politics of Aristotle." This seems to have encouraged another learned man, named Pietro Candido Decembrio, the subsequent keeper of the archives of the erudite Pope Nicholas V., to offer him a translation of a not less celebrated work, the "Republic of Plato." The Archbishop of Milan does not hesitate to enforce this request by a warm recommendation; while he flatters the duke by comparing him with Julius Cæsar and Augustus. This interesting correspondence exists in a manuscript form, together with other documents, at Munich and Durham, where there are also preserved the answers which Gloucester wrote from London and Penshurst, and in which he expresses the lively satisfaction which it has given him to hear of the impulse that had been imparted to literature, and of the zeal of many men who were acquainted with Latin and Greek, while he accepts the dedication with thanks; and as Decembrio had only sent him the five first books of the "Republic," he begs, in March, 1439, for the whole of the work, although the individual portions were originally to have been dedicated to different patrons of learning. The duke, as is repeatedly noticed, acted with a truly princely munificence towards all these persons.

We also meet with abundant evidence that he was a most zealous collector of books. Thus we find that the

heads of various rich monasteries, who were anxious to secure his favour, frequently presented him with codices, ornamented with finely illuminated portraits, on which occasions he was accustomed to inscribe, on the fly-leaf before the title, the words, *Moun bien moundain*—"My worldly goods!" A manuscript work on the history of Scotland, now in the British Museum, is not inscribed with these words, but it contains a notice in French which was very probably written by Gloucester himself, designating the book as his property. The same is the case with regard to a commentary on the book of Genesis, which is preserved at Oxford, and is the work of the well-known Augustine monk, John Capgrave, who was well known as a historian and theologian, and who likewise stood on a friendly footing with Gloucester, and is said to have written his life, which has unfortunately not yet been recovered. It is probable that Poggio Bracciolini, who, it is well known, came to England in 1420 in order to search for manuscripts of the classics, stood even at that time on an intimate footing with Gloucester, who may possibly have had business transactions with him in regard to the purchase of books.

The old register of the University of Oxford contains an entry, in the year 1443, to the effect that the duke had made a bequest to the university of a library of 135 volumes. It is to be regretted that no catalogue of this collection has come down to us, as it would have afforded us a deeper insight into the mental activity of the prince, as well as into the composition of a princely library, which, although the art of printing had been recently discovered, must have consisted only of manuscripts.

It is gratifying, after having spoken with so much blame of the life of the Duke of Gloucester, which was ruined by ambition and passion, to be able to add a few words of praise. But even his patronage of learning, and his effort to foster a taste for literature, do not entitle him to the appellation of the "good" duke, a designation which he probably owed only to political party-feelings. The weak and evil side of this revived form of literature is, that its disciples should have elevated the morality, or rather the immorality, of classical antiquity above Christian discipline and virtue. In Duke Humphrey's life there was, indeed, no question of morality, and still less of religion. The voice of Wiclif and of his preachers, which had called upon men in the words of the Gospel to renounce the evil of their ways, had been stifled in the flames at the stake; and the Duke, who occasionally also took part in these persecutions against heretics, lived in an age when the high clergy ventured, unchecked and careless of the salvation of their own souls and that of others, to lead a godless and God-forgetting life, and when pontiffs and prelates, and other high dignitaries of the Church, even if they strove to attain to a nobler culture, could only learn to believe and to think, as the old heathens of Athens and Rome had in their day believed and thought. Is it, then, much to be wondered at if, among so many examples, Duke Humphrey should have thought that he might more readily than others attain the power at which he aimed by putting his trust in Plato and Aristotle, or that he should have caused the life of his brother to be written from similar motives, and that even in his nobler aspirations he should not have remained free

from intense vanity? His want of moral retinence finally urged his love of knowledge and his thirst for inquiry into evil and destructive paths; and it would seem as if the results were very nearly analogous to those which we see exemplified in the German knight Ulrich von Hutten, a more trustworthy and a bolder champion of the same mental tendencies.

XII.

LONDON IN THE MIDDLE AGES.

Paris may justly boast of having been, during the middle ages, a representative of ancient Rome, among the nations which ruled the destinies of the world, and of having been, both in a spiritual, intellectual, and political sense, the metropolis and the central point from whence emanated the streams of public vitality. The powerful impulse and enthusiasm of the Crusades met with the most efficient protection at the court of the French kings. The University of Paris had, moreover, become conspicuous as the first in Western Christendom in respect to all those departments of knowledge which mankind had then mastered; while even in these days the Parisians gave the tone in regard to art, taste, elegance of deportment, and good as well as evil habits, which was at once followed by all nations of Roman and Germanic origin. In regard to magnitude, wealth, and beauty, this city, for a time, undoubtedly far surpassed all others north of the Alps.

In some of these qualifications Paris, however, had very early a rival, who, moreover, was possessed of many other admirable advantages, which enabled her speedily to dispute the supremacy in regard to several points. For if London did not, like Paris, constantly attract the

eyes of the world to herself in the march of political and civil progress, this must rather be referred to her insular position. But it was precisely to this cause that we must attribute many of the enormous advantages which London possessed in other respects. Situated in an island, which nature has endowed with inexhaustible means of self-help, the city rose on the banks of a wide stream, and not too far from its mouth to be entirely deprived of the whole force of the ever-persistent recurrence of the tides. On either side of the stream rise a succession of hills, in gentle undulating lines, along which the river-bed of a former age, many miles in width, may still be traced, which are not of sufficient elevation to place an impassable barrier against the immense increase of this the largest city of the world, and, which, on the contrary, have contributed, like the river, both in ancient and in modern times, to influence the character of London. There was scarcely another spot upon the earth which could have constituted a more favourably placed intermediate station of intercommunication, when Northern Europe became incorporated into the universal body of European policy, while it still maintains its rank, although America and the Australasian continent are now added to the rest of the known world.

It is natural that the different races from which the English nation has been developed in the course of ages, should have more or less deeply impressed the mark of their presence on London, which is, in fact, England. Its connexion with the ancient Britons is, indeed, a mere matter of mythical fable; and, according to this tradition, the names London, Caer-lud, and Ludgate

are said to perpetuate the memory of one of these mythical kings, who trace their origin through Brutus to Troy, and even amongst the first known English poets, London is named the new Troy. More modern writers would refer the name to the Welsh, in which it is pretended to signify the city of ships; while they try to recognise in the Tower the ancient seat of a prince of the Trinobantes, and in many very remarkable remains the traces of the presence of the first British population. This much only is certain, from the unquestionable testimony of Tacitus, that the Romans, when they had begun to examine more closely the condition of England, discovered a considerable commercial town on the north side of the Thames, to which many merchants from different countries resorted for purposes of trade. This admirably-placed town was rebuilt by the Romans after a general fire, received a Roman name, and acquired the various establishments and modes of organization, in respect to which the Roman colonies strove to vie with the mother city. There are many places in London where, even at the present day, Roman pavements, ancient mosaic floors, and similar memorials of art, have been discovered fifteen feet below the surface; and not only the hill of St. Paul's, but many other consecrated spots, must have served as a place of burial in heathen as well as in early Christian times, as is proved by the numerous urns that have been excavated at these points. As similar remains have been found on the opposite side of the river, a wide bridge may very likely have connected both shores at the time of the Romans. The old Roman walls which once surrounded the city as in a quadrangle, and its four

principal gates, may even now be approximately traced; for many well-preserved bricks indicate the direction of the one, and the locality of the other.

This early magnificence was miserably destroyed in the barbaric turmoils of the fifth and sixth centuries. The Saxons, who were accustomed to their fields and woods, avoided the city, whose walls for centuries seemed to have defied both wind and weather, and to have resisted the attacks of fierce enemies of every kind. Only one solitary speck of light is visible in the midst of the darkness, where a bishop's see, the church of St. Paul, arose from amid the ruins of a temple of Diana, on the highest elevation of the city; while two or three miles higher up the stream, in the midst of a small island, overgrown with thorns, where once an image of Apollo had stood, a pious king of Essex erected an abbey, and dedicated it to St. Peter. Of London in the Saxon times there is scarcely anything to relate; for when Alfred rebuilt the city, after the fearful devastation of the Danes, the restoration was undoubtedly effected with Roman materials, and in accordance with the ancient ground-plan, which is not yet wholly effaced. It is only towards the close of the tenth century that we again meet with indications that the natural position of the place as a mercantile city had preserved its original character. Even in the midst of those terrible times, we find foreign merchants—most probably Germans, although, perhaps, also Scandinavians—maintaining a regular and privileged intercourse with the inhabitants. When the Danish freebooters turned their eager eyes towards London, they were met by the citizens, who defended themselves with valour and

success. It is probable that at that time these formidable enemies had attained a secure footing in Southwark, where, for the sake of sailing round the bridge, they dug a canal, the course of which could long afterwards be traced; and where, finally, they settled peacefully down. St. Olave's church and Tooley-street are very remarkable memorials of the conversion of the Scandinavians on English soil.

London, like the church and state, entered upon a new phase of existence with William the Conqueror. This city, like the rest of England, had been obliged to submit to his yoke; and was, as far as we know, for a time subjected to the absolute power of its enemies. In the east, where Britons, Romans, and Saxons had unquestionably maintained a fortress for the sake of commanding the river, there was now erected a tower, known as the White Tower, which was composed of indestructible materials, and was intended to serve as a place of refuge for the sovereign in all cases of need, or as a fortress to defy his enemies. Two other towers, somewhat farther up the stream, but in the line of wall which faced the river, were intrusted by William to two of his nobles, named Baynard and Montfichet, as hereditary fiefs, with feudal rights and duties. The descendants of the former of these, for a considerable time, kept possession of this property, and enjoyed great privileges as keepers of the Tower and bannarets of the city, long after London had attained a high degree of importance. In return for these privileges they brought twenty horsemen to the aid of the lord mayor in time of war, and received the standard of London, at the head of a solemn procession, at the gates of the cathedral. This was a

genuine creation of the powerful Conqueror, no less than the foundation arches of the Tower, which were consolidated with Cyclopean cement, and those walls, which have bid defiance to the ravages of time, on which William II. erected his great hall at Westminster. The recognised power of such princes after those past ages, which had threatened to overwhelm everything in one common ruin, bore its own good fruits, and appears to have abundantly contributed to the benefit of the city of London. A mixture of people of different rank and origin found safety and protection, together with the Saxo-Norman population, behind the solid walls of the city, where they enjoyed personal freedom, and could devote themselves with industry and success to navigation, inland trade, and every species of useful art; and scarcely three generations later, William Fitz-Stephens, one of the contemporaneous biographers of the martyred and canonized archbishop, Thomas Becket, related wonderful things of the splendour of his native city, which, if they had not been corroborated by innumerable proofs, would necessarily brand this first description of London as a mere fabulous invention. Since these times, its rise has been steady and uninterrupted. London has often participated, directly and independently, in the political changes of the English state, which was constantly rising into greater celebrity, while, in a commercial point of view, it attained the first rank in the country; at the same time that it acquired from the strangers who shared in its hospitality, so successful a knowledge of the several arts in which they exhibited special proficiency, that the industrious citizens of London had already, in the fourteenth century, begun to enter into

relations of business on a large scale, not merely as recipients of the produce of other nations, but as great exporters of wool and hides, and other native sources of wealth. The long and brilliant reign of Edward III. had tended more than any which preceded it to impress upon London that mediæval character which is not yet wholly effaced, notwithstanding the great fire of 1666, and the levelling alterations of modern times; and it is this character which we shall endeavour to represent in a few brief notices, such as are afforded by various annals and other authentic records.

We trust it will not be regarded as wearisome, if we preface our remarks with a few necessary references to the topography of the city. The direction of the old city walls had, in many respects, been very much altered. It was only in the east, however, that they had been thrown farther back, in consequence of Richard Cœur de Lion's eager desire to secure the space necessary for a new outwork of the Tower. At all other parts, but especially in the west, the city walls had, from the end of the middle ages, been constantly brought more and more forward. They had, however, already lost much of their original character; for, according to the veracious description in Sir Thomas More's "Utopia," they had been built high and thick of stones, and strengthened by many bulwarks and watch-towers, and by the strong barbican which projected to the north-west. The deep and broad moat was either almost without water, or a mere turbid pool, in which grew an abundant crop of thorns and underwood. In addition to the four old gates, whose origin dated from the time of the Romans, there were many

others that had been added at subsequent periods. Their names still remain, although, like some great monster, the city has burst its bonds, and long since thrown aside both walls and moats, spreading in all directions in the most gigantic proportions. In the middle ages, however, these gates served as the protecting barriers of communication, and were built with great care and with much attention to ornament, while they retained many singular memorials of earlier days. In the south-east, opposite to the Tower, it had been necessary, for the sake of maintaining intercourse with the royal fortress, to erect a gate, which the authorities, however, soon suffered to fall into decay, probably on account of the protection which was derived from the fortifications of the Tower. Somewhat farther north was Aldgate, which had been founded and named by the Saxons. To the north-east of this was Bishopsgate, whose maintenance and protection had been assigned in time of war by Henry III. to the German Hanseatic Guild as a compulsory service, in return for the great privileges that had been awarded to them. The north side of the city wall was bounded by Moorgate, where the moat had been extended into a morass by the conjunction of several streams; and next came Cripplegate, where, even under the Saxons, crippled beggars were wont to resort for the sake of being healed by touching the relics of St. Edmund. The principal entrance at the north had always been Aldersgate, as is sufficiently proved by the Roman remains that have been found there. The Newgate was built in the north-west in the twelfth century, and even in King John's time prisoners were kept in the upper portions of the building. Ludgate, the principal

entrance from the west, at the foot of St. Paul's hill, was regarded as the most ancient memorial of Celtic London, and was also employed from an early period as a prison. The walls along the water-side began to disappear under the Norman kings, when, on account of the landing-places at the many public and private wharfs, it was found necessary to open many additional water-gates. Several of the streets near the water's edge, between Dowgate and Billingsgate, remind us of these structures; there was, however, only one large gate which faced the south, known as Bridgegate.

London Bridge, which continued, until the last century, to be the only bridge of the city, was a very remarkable structure even in the middle ages, and it retained a character of great singularity up to recent times. After the Saxons, and the Romans very probably still earlier, had possessed a wooden bridge at this spot, Henry II. began, in the year 1176, to construct a stone bridge, which, however, was not completed till the year 1209, under his son John.* Injuries from fire and water, and inexperience in erecting so difficult a structure, must have made many alterations and restorations necessary, until at length the edifice was permanently completed, and raised upon twenty strong but irregular arches, made of solid freestone masonry, having a large drawbridge in the middle. The powerful stream now flowed backwards and forwards through these arches, while on the bridge itself there arose, in the course of time, a regular street, solid enough to support on both sides high and stately houses, and affording even sufficient room for a tournament, which was held upon its pavement in the year 1395. Almost in the

centre stood a Gothic chapel, dedicated to St. Thomas, at which a priest regularly performed mass. Two solid fortified gateways, having battlements and a portcullis, closed the entrances at the northern and at the southern ends. It continued to be the custom for ages to adorn the battlements of these gates with the heads of traitors stuck upon spikes; and from thence the heads of Llewellyn, the last of the Welsh princes, the brave Wallace, the bold favourite, Hugo Despencer, and many other heroes and ruffians, looked down upon the gay and busy crowd that passed below. In unquiet times the fate of the city depended in a great measure upon the possession of this only bridge; while, in the great rising of the lower classes in the year 1381, and in Jack Cade's rebellion in 1450, London was lost and saved as often as the ringleaders became masters of the bridge, or were driven from it. In the year 1425 Duke Humphrey of Gloucester lay under arms with his followers on the north side, and the Bishop of Winchester on the south of the river, when it seemed as if the uncle and nephew were on the very eve of settling their personal and political differences in a bloody contest above the water of the Thames. Such occurrences as these were, however, happily of tolerably rare occurrence; and for many years, nay, even for centuries together, the gates of the bridge were not closed against any foe. It was only at night that, in accordance with the regulations, it was required that the drawbridge should be drawn up and the portcullis let down. All further communication between Middlesex and Surrey was effected by means of ferry-boats, which plied from definite points, and were, from a very early period, worked by a special class of boatmen.

In regard to the interior of the old city, it would appear that in early times, the more decided alternation of hills and valleys must materially have influenced the disposition of the streets and squares. The Langburne, a stream which originated at the top of Hampstead-hill, formerly intersected the city in a southerly direction, and separated St. Paul's hill in the west from the elevation in the east which extends to Tower-hill. Two other streams, the Walbrooke and the Sherburne, originated in a spring near the east wall, and fell into the Langburne, in the heart of the city. These waters, however, were early built over, and were employed for the extension of a large system of drains and sewers, which had undoubtedly been a legacy to London from the times of the Romans. The Fleet, which ran along the city wall in the west, and was at one time a much more considerable stream, experienced a similar fate, although portions of it remained uncovered until recent times, or were merely spanned by bridges. Even in the thirteenth century, several of these brooks became useless; while even the springs at Holywell, Clerkenwell, and St. Clement's-well, which had been once highly prized on account of their clearness, were no longer sufficient to supply the city with drinking water. The necessity of the case led to the projection of large water works, which Fitz-Stephens characterises, together with the sewers, as an imitation of the wonders of Rome. The water was frequently brought for several miles through leaden tubes, when it was suffered to flow forth from tastefully constructed wells under gothic arches, and in the midst of typical figures. The great water-works which were laid down in 1285 at Westcheap, became a

pattern for many others, which were erected in the fifteenth century at different public spots in the city, and formed the centre of the civic rejoicings on the occasion of royal proclamations, coronations, and similar festivals. On these occasions it was customary, instead of pure water, to let large quantities of white and red wine flow from the springs, while these spots were favourite places for the erection of stages for those allegorical representations in which both princes and people took special delight.

Elevations of ground and the direction of the watercourses had, however, a more visible share in modifying the ancient ground plan of London. St. Paul's church stood tolerably free upon its own hill; while in the west ran Fleet-street, through Ludgate and over the Fleet; to the east lay Cheapside, with its sale-booths on the one side of the street, and separating at Langburne and Walbrooke into several branches; Cornhill and Leadenhall-street came next in order, and then Lombard-street and Fenchurch-street, extending towards Aldgate. Nearly parallel with these streets, and close to the river, from which it took its name (and to its proximity with which it owed its origin), ran Thames-street, which had probably existed from a very early age, together with its continuation, Tower-street, which communicated with a number of small alleys and passages leading to the water side. Eastcheap formed, as it were, the central point, where all these streets were intersected by Fish-street, which led from the bridge, and ran in a northern direction, through Gracechurch-street to Bishopsgate, and north-west to Moorgate and Aldersgate. Other more or less important streets terminated at the different

gates, but all were alike angular and full of turnings, as is the case in all old cities

The houses were built in early times in a simple and almost mean way, of wood and mud, and were covered with straw or rushes. A great and destructive fire, which took place under King Stephen, drew attention to the dangers which such a style of building brought upon the population; and in 1189, the first year after King Richard's accession, the first ordinance issued by the authorities for regulating the mode of building houses, which is still extant, determined that the side walls of the houses should be at least three feet thick, and sixteen feet high, and formed of hewn stones. Above this was usually erected a wooden gable roof of irregular height, and generally projecting into the street. It was washed with lime, and then painted, and also frequently ornamented with carved work; and instead of straw the roofs of houses were soon covered exclusively with shingles or tiles, or even lead. The ground floor was for the most part appropriated to purposes of business, or to carry on different trades, while the principal apartment, which was then known in England as the *solar*, together with the sleeping rooms, was on the first floor, but still within the stone walls. It was not till after the fourteenth century that any upper floors were added to the houses; but at that time it was also the custom to hang out the goods that were to be sold from the first floor, where they were displayed upon small moveable wooden frames, which projected into the streets. The police insisted, however, that these frames should be raised at least nine feet from the ground, and that they should not project so far as to interfere with

the carriages and horsemen, or obstruct the light. The large and massive cellars which were entered by a staircase going down from the street, and the wide lofts within the gabled roofs, were indispensable requirements for the mercantile population of London. Special care was taken by the civic authorities to secure a good drainage for the running off of rain-water, as well as for the arrangement of the sewers. The windows were not universally made of glass in the time of Richard I., but about the middle of the thirteenth century, we find this important article among the objects of regular import, and from the time of Edward III. there existed a special guild of glaziers, who made it their business to see that the houses were kept light and warm, by means of glass windows. Chimneys were for a long time objects of luxury, and in the ordinary burghers' houses the smoke had to make its way out as best it could. It was not till the beginning of the fourteenth century that chimneys made of stone and solid materials were common in houses. The fire and street inspectors were at that time enjoined to see that all chimneys connected with fireplaces, at which cooking was done, were not in close proximity to any woodwork.

The great fire of the year 1666 scarcely spared a single ornamented building of the old city, although the delineations which have come down to us of many of them will enable us to form some idea of their appearance and position. The City-hall, or Guildhall, lay pretty nearly in the centre of the city, where, in the Saxon and Danish times, the hustings had stood for the public courts and elections. Under the reigns of Henry IV., Henry V., and Henry VI., the civic magistrates

caused a stately building to be erected in the ornamented style of the times, of which there only remain at the present day the walls, which are now surrounded with buildings of a later period. A beautiful chapel, with an admirable library, was in olden times the special pride of Guildhall. The increasing riches and influence of the guilds, principally in the fifteenth century, frequently led to the erection of very beautiful buildings, chiefly designed for social purposes, and known as the halls of the various trades to which they belonged; but, unfortunately, there is not one of these buildings still extant retains any decided mediæval character. The crown, nobles, and prelates, moreover, possessed property and houses of every kind in the city, which were soon distinguished by the characteristics of wealth and taste. Many of the noblemen, bishops, abbots, and priors, who visited London several times in the course of the year, for the sake of attending the different courts and meetings of parliament, purchased land, either within the gates or beyond the precincts of the city, and erected dwellings which were often of a princely kind, and were surrounded, in accordance with their individual tastes, either by gardens or courts. The Crown acquired possession, either through inheritance or forfeiture, of many admirable spots in the heart of the city; thus, Humphrey Duke of Gloucester, and after him the House of York, occupied Baynard Castle; while Henry IV. gave to his light-hearted son, the Prince of Wales, a house that had been bequeathed to him at Coldharbour, on the Thames, and not very far distant from the attractive taverns in Eastcheap; and, shortly before Richard III. had effected his bold usurpa-

tion of the crown, and had removed to Baynard Castle, he held his court at Crosby Hall, whose Gothic arches and bow-windows stand strangely out from among the other houses of the crowded thoroughfare of Bishopsgate-street.

The greatest architectural designs were here, as everywhere else in the middle ages, the ecclesiastical buildings, to the embellishment of which the pious zeal of all ranks of society had contributed their share. Even Fitz-Stephens triumphantly relates that London and the territory belonging to it could boast of a hundred and twenty-six parish churches and chapels, in addition to the cathedral and the thirteen great conventual churches; and it is scarcely an exaggerated estimate if we assume that, at the time of the Reformation, more than two-thirds of the precincts of the city were occupied by the buildings and grounds belonging to ecclesiastical proprietors, who, as they constituted a fifth part of the entire population, must indeed have lived most commodiously and luxuriously. The old and noble church of St. Paul, upon the west hill, formed, together with the ecclesiastical buildings that surrounded it, a special section of the city. Next to the cloisters stood a noble Gothic building, used as a chapter-house. The bishop's palace, the houses of the canons, and numerous other buildings and offices connected with the church, surrounded a tolerably extensive and open space, in the midst of which stood a cross, formed of freestone and elegantly carved. Here, on occasions of excitement, the people flocked together in crowded assemblies, while the priests and laity were accustomed to address the multitude from the steps. Even before the Reformation

a kind of pulpit had been erected close by, from which sermons were addressed to the assembled multitude on Sundays and holidays. In the Wars of the Roses it was from hence that the first note of any unexpected revolutionary change in the government resounded; and from hence, too, Richard III. endeavoured, like a genuine demagogue, to prepare the populace for his ambitious schemes. Two other characteristic peculiarities had, in the course of time, become associated with the cathedral. The number of ecclesiastics who were assembled at this spot, and the vicinity of the schools, had led the dealers in books, at a very early period, to establish their stalls in Paternoster-row, lying to the north of the churchyard, where, besides the rosaries and pictures of the saints, books, both with and without miniatures, and, as early as the reign of Henry VI., even the interdicted writings of Wiclif and his adherents, were offered for sale; while, round the churchyard, which was ever crowded with a busy throng, confectioners and tavern-keepers actively plied their several trades from year to year. These two trades, which supplied food both for the body and the mind, appear to have lingered with great pertinacity around the same old spots.

The numerous churches, which were often dedicated to very strange saints, who probably scarcely possessed an altar anywhere else, naturally fell far short of the cathedral, both as to size and beauty, and they were probably, with few exceptions, as much pressed upon for want of space and concealed from view in former times as they now are. On the other hand, however, the monastic buildings, of which nothing beyond their names now

remains, were all the more liberally accommodated with space; and the mendicant orders more especially, true to their usual tendencies, settled themselves either within the city, or else close to the walls. Nowhere, certainly, does a comparison between the past and the present give rise to more peculiar considerations. The Dominicans, or Black Friars, lived at one period in a manner so much at variance with the rules of their order, that the king and parliament were accustomed to hold their meetings in their conventual house, when their own quarters at Westminster did not happen to please them; and now, on the site of this imposing edifice, an ever-crowded street leads to one of the large bridges of London; while, within the precincts of those ancient buildings, the colossal columns of the *Times* are now printed. Somewhat farther westward, the Carmelites, or White Friars, had their residence; and, very long after their suppression, the right of asylum which they had maintained still continued to exist: for here debtors, concealers of stolen goods, and thieves, crowded together, bidding defiance to the officers of the law. The priory of the Augustines appears, even in Thomas Cromwell's time, to have given place to the counting-houses of the merchants in Broad-street, somewhat north of the present Exchange; but their beautiful chapel, which escaped the great fire, has been appropriated, since the time of Edward III., to the Dutch Protestants. The Franciscans, or Grey Friars, who were more influential than the other mendicant orders, had prepared themselves a noble residence close to Newgate. After their ejection by order of Henry VIII., their house was devoted by his son, Edward VI., to the use of Christchurch school, which still flourishes,

with its ancient building, dress, customs, and system of education. On the ground which was once occupied by the conventual church of St. Martin's le Grand, which had been nobly endowed by William the Conqueror, stands the General Post-Office of Great Britain. It would, however, be wearisome, were we to enumerate all the monkish institutions, nunneries, hospitals, and chapels which once existed in ancient London. They lead us, however, to the suburbs, which acquired great significance early in the middle ages.

The entire city was then surrounded by a circle of more or less magnificent ecclesiastical institutions, whose solid, and often beautiful, buildings were pleasantly situated in the midst of their own gardens and grounds. The roads leading to them, which originally ran between hedges and meadows, were soon converted into streets, thickly lined with houses, occupied by some of the surplus population which could no longer find room within the city walls, and which continued to spread with ever-increasing rapidity. Among the many points of attraction towards which these different new streets radiated from the centre of the city, we may first instance, in the east, St. Catherine's Abbey, whose precincts almost surrounded the fortifications of the Tower; the abbey of the Cistercians, in East Smithfield; and the stately Trinity Priory. In the north, the Carthusians had built themselves a beautiful house, the memory of which is perpetuated to the present day in the ancient Charter House, with its celebrated school. The renown that appertained to the priory of St. Bartholomew the Great still lives in the hospital that bears the same name. Very different, however, have been the fate and

the memorials of two ecclesiastical orders of knighthood, which, soon after their foundation, had established provincial houses of their own in London similar to those which they already possessed in Paris. The knights of St. John owned one of the most beautiful abbeys of London. This building, which was surrounded by gardens, fields, and woods, was situated to the north-west of the city, about a mile beyond the gate, and remained in their possession till the destructive days of the sixteenth century. Princes and kings were often received there as guests, and important political matters have frequently been discussed within its walls; now, however, there only remains an old gateway, which once led to the interior of the edifice, but which in the present day stands isolated, and differing from all around it, in a densely crowded and even dirty neighbourhood, showing the antiquarian, by its few architectural ruins, how richly and tastefully the entire building must have been decorated centuries ago. A different fate was indeed reserved for the Temple. It is true that the miserable and weak Edward II. did not hesitate to follow in the steps of the pope and the king of France, and entirely to annihilate the order by the rack and perpetual imprisonment. Their stately residence remained, however, standing, and after it had originally been given to the knights of St. John, Edward III. appropriated the buildings to the members of the bar; who, even at the present day, occupy this small but special district at the west end of Fleet-street. The gates are still adorned with the red cross, while the noble chapel, which was built after the pattern of the holy sepulchre, and has been preserved with anxious care, serves the society as their church.

The entire district lying to the west of Newgate and Ludgate was already thickly built over in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Fleet-street, with its bridge over the stream that bears the same name, was, as it were, the main branch of communication through the district; and the same streets existed then which now run on either side of this great thoroughfare, leading south towards the river, and north towards Holborn. It is worthy of notice that, like the inns of court in the Temple, there arose, at the same period and in the same district of London, other legal corporations of a similar character, as, for instance, Lincoln's Inn, which took its name from the former town residence of the Earls of Lincoln, and was situated in close proximity to the Court of Chancery, which, at an early period, became permanently established in Chancery Lane. Sergeants' Inn, Clifford's Inn, and Clement's Inn, were all in the same neighbourhood; while further north, in Holborn, lay Gray's Inn, Thavie's Inn, Furnival's Inn, and Staple Inn. Thus there arose, between the Temple and the priory of the knights of St. John, a quarter of the town which was specially appropriated to the study and practice of the law.

The tendency which is very frequently manifested in large towns of spreading in a westerly direction was strongly exhibited in London from the most ancient period. Thus three miles to the west of Ludgate, above the river, and behind a sharp bend of the stream, arose the ancient abbey of Westminster. When Edward the Confessor had been canonized, and a shrine erected to his memory at that spot, the abbey church, as if the St. Denis and Rheims of England had been merged into one, became at once the place of the coronation and burial of the

English kings, and more especially those of the Plantagenet family. Henry III., who was distinguished for his love of art, took special delight in rebuilding the church, almost from its foundation, in so noble and chaste a style of architecture, that the portions which have been added in a more ornamental style by his successors bear no comparison with the main parts of the building. Near the abbey there soon arose, under the Norman princes, a royal residence and palace for the use of the kings and their courts, when they determined to relinquish their general wandering mode of life, and remain stationary. When after the signing of Magna Charta the courts of law had become permanently established, it was here, also, that they were located. It was not long before parliament became a standing institution of the land; and the lords were then allowed to hold their meetings in the state apartments of the crown, whilst the commons, for the most part, deliberated together in the beautiful octagonal chapter-house of the abbey. The present is not the place to enumerate the splendours of ancient Westminster, with its church and palace, its pleasure-gardens, and its park; and it will be sufficient if we merely remark, that during the middle ages it constituted, in all its grand exclusiveness, the residence of the monarchs, although there was an obvious and strong tendency to extend it, in the course of time, by the addition of various contiguous buildings and accessories. The place rapidly increased, and the royal stables, store-houses, and the dwellings for the officers of the court, soon began to surround the original church and palace; while a special church, dedicated to St. Margaret, pressed close on to the

abbey, like an offshoot from the mother institution. This atmosphere of royalty naturally attracted to it all those who had any right to approach within its boundaries; and the nobility and higher clergy soon showed a decided predilection for the district lying between Temple Bar, at the western extremity of Fleet-street, and Westminster, where they built fine houses, surrounded by gardens, which extended down to the river-side. The palace of the Archbishop of York, which was subsequently known as Whitehall, was almost close to the principal courts of the royal residence. Next followed the house of the Bishop of Durham; but conspicuous among the others was the proud Savoy palace, in which the avaricious Provençal relatives of Henry III.'s consort had once been domiciled, where subsequently the imprisoned king John of France lived during his captivity, and where, in the palmy days of his prosperity, the Duke of Lancaster kept his court. The entire street or road, which ran parallel with the river from the old church of St. Clement the Dane's to Charing-cross, where the road turned southward to Westminster, and where fresh horses and an invigorating drink were kept ready for horsemen coming from London, had probably been already long known as the Strand.

On the other side of the river lay many points isolated and unconnected with one another, which are now joined together into a district of the town that numbers its hundreds of thousands of inhabitants. It was only at the outlet of the bridge, at Southwark, that there had, from different causes, arisen in ancient times a town-like settlement. Two great priories, the monastery of St. Mary Overies, and the nunnery of Bermondsey, had

early given rise to the activity and busy intercommunication which naturally resulted from the vicinity of such ecclesiastical institutions as these. Near to St. Mary's, and not far from the bridge, there stood until the time of the Reformation the magnificent palace of the Bishop of Winchester, one of the wealthiest prelates of the land, whose extensive spiritual jurisdiction included the county of Surrey. The most important agent in this great intercommunication was the high road which ran from the bridge, and extended through the country to the ports of Kent, Hampshire, and Cornwall. Here heavily-laden pack wagons were constantly moving to and fro; and here, too, assembled, at the appointed seasons of the year, the motley crowds of pilgrims which were bound for the shrine of the holy Thomas Becket, at Canterbury. The Tabard Inn had been known far and near for many ages, from the vivid descriptions given by Chaucer of the busy life and stir that blended there with devotion and adventure. All remains of it are not yet wholly effaced, although there has been erected in its immediate neighbourhood the railway terminus of that great overland route which connects England with India and China. The greater part of the land lying on the opposite bank of the river consisted of fields and gardens, with a few larger hamlets, and some places of amusement where bear-baiting and cock-fighting were practised. Immediately opposite to Westminster rose the chapel, and castellated towers and walls, of the princely residence which the Archbishops of Canterbury had chosen before the close of the twelfth century for their town residence, in the immediate neighbourhood of the offices of state and the tribunals of justice.

We have thus briefly given the outlines of the plan presented by the city and its appendages in the middle ages; and we will now pass on to a rapid survey of the life and policy which helped to fill up this framework. At the close of the civil war under King Stephen, and at the accession to the throne of the first of the Plantagenets, there was at once an end to the absolute rule of the Normans, and to the prevalence of a wild feudal right of the strong over the weak; and in their place there arose the first germs of a system of administration which had been revived and renovated from ancient Germanic forms. These ancient germs of power were soon manifested in a special manner within the domain of the city of London. The provost or bailiff, who had once been regarded as the king's vicegerent of the city, which was considered to be included in the domain of the sovereign, after having supplanted the Saxon portreve, was in his turn obliged to yield to the organs of municipal self-government. It is worthy of notice that this new order of things, notwithstanding many symptoms of tumultuous disturbance within the city, had come into force during the rule of Richard Cœur de Lion. The crown, in return for an annual payment of £400, had renounced all claim not only to the administrative and judicial power of the city, but also of the county of Middlesex, and of the right bank of the river. Two sheriffs, who were elected by the city on the nomination of the sovereign, presided over the administrative, fiscal, and judicial affairs of London, as their brother sheriffs did in the different shires and counties of the land. In the year 1189 we hear, for the first time, of a dignitary who was invested with the

highest civic rank under the Franco-Norman title of mayor, and with prerogatives which, in many respects, correspond with those of royalty, although on a smaller scale. The first known mayor, named Henry Fitz-Alwyn, who is said to have held the office for three and twenty years, had most probably been raised to this dignity by the general acclamation and concurrence of the community, and must, moreover, have had the support of the prince. After this began annual elections, in which it would appear that great disturbances took place owing to the participation of all the citizens in the proceedings. At the close of the century Edward I. extended his administrative activity to the city, in which definite representatives now voted instead of the whole community. The guilds obtained the rights which they still exercise under Edward IV., but from the earliest period the confirmation of the crown was required for the election, and the citizens were wont to go in a solemn procession, which, in recent days, has become a kind of civic carnival, on the 9th of November, to Westminster, that the mayor, like a peer on receiving a crown fief, might tender the oath of fealty to the king or his chancellor. We find that even in Magna Charta the mayor of London is referred to as holding a rank in the State which was as important as that of the most powerful earls and barons, and a century later he was designated as lord mayor, and enjoyed the title, honours, and state of one of the first magnates of the land.

His power was, however, as far from being absolute as that of the crown. There had existed from olden times a civic nobility, which had adopted the once proud Anglo-Saxon designation of aldermen, who, in the

public documents of the middle ages are very distinctly designated as "barons." These aldermen were originally considered as nobles, and even possessed hereditary claims to the wards over which they presided. As late as the time of Edward I. the wards took their names from those who presided over them, and were transferable by will. A ward, however, corresponded to the Saxon *sokà* of certain counties, in which the men and district were bound to supply the lord of the manor with subsidies in time of war, in return for which they enjoyed his judicial protection. Among the holders of these wards appeared, in the thirteenth century, such distinguished names as those of the King of Scotland, the Earl of Gloucester, the Abbot of Westminster, the Chapter of St. Paul's, the Prior of Trinity Abbey, and many other prelates, and even the abbesses of convents situated within and without the ward. These wards corresponded, therefore, as sub-divisions of the civic principality, to the shires and counties of England. This feudal condition came to an end about the beginning of the fourteenth century, when, in the place of personal designations, we for the first time meet with the local names, which are still preserved. The five-and-twenty wards within the city, and one on the opposite bank of the river, known as Bridgeward-without, were each under the supervision of an alderman, who was elected for life by all the freemen of his ward, who, including all who paid scot and lot, constituted the "ward-mote." The court of aldermen became, to a certain extent, a representation of the upper house or house of peers, after the civic magistracy had begun to imitate the forms of parliament.

This court was presided over by the lord mayor, who must previously have served as sheriff, and must belong to the body of aldermen, and who may in many respects be regarded as a king of the city.

The civic lower house was, on the other hand, elected from the freemen, who sent a definite number of representatives to the council, according to the size and population of their wards. They thus represented the knights of the shires who were chosen to sit in parliament, and they had the right of sitting with the lord mayor and the aldermen in a large and general assembly, known as the common council.

While, however, the democratic tendency of the civic administration thus made itself appreciable in tolerably extensive spheres, there arose at an early period a new class of civic office-bearers, who seemed destined to replace the old and abrogated patrician elements and those aristocratic forms which had been borrowed from parliament. These were the corporations or guilds, which, as everywhere else in the middle ages, brought their corporate system to great significance in London. We can scarcely compare the guilds of London with those of the Anglo-Saxons and of the twelfth century, when certain native brotherhoods were organized in England to meet the requirements of social protection, or were instituted for religious and military purposes, as the knights'-guilds, or when foreigners, like the German Hanseatic guild, were associated together to enjoy special commercial privileges. In the latter part of the middle ages handicrafts and trades were required to form the basis, as it were, of a guild, in which there certainly still lingered some trace of the exclusive character

of a religious brotherhood. The earliest combinations of this kind may be traced as far back as to the reign of Henry II. when the weavers obtained their first charter. The idea of forming influential corporations on the ground of certain rights being given in return for the fulfilment of various duties, began first to be fully established during the brilliant reign of Edward III., when many of the most distinguished guilds were incorporated in rapid succession, one after the other, by royal patent, and in return for an annual sum of money, such as the city itself had once paid. They were often called upon to aid the king and the lord mayor with the treasures of their richly-filled and well-protected coffers, and in return they took care to secure for themselves extensive privileges and ample compensation. They obtained from the crown the right, which had hitherto belonged to the wards, of electing their representatives to parliament. In the common council of the city, in which they sate as freemen, their influence soon became paramount, as they belonged to the most distinguished class of the citizens. In the year 1435, we find the brewers designating the lord mayor with much humility as their most highly honoured and gracious lord and sovereign, the Mayor of London; but some years later this guild secured the right and privilege that this civic sovereign should for the future be exclusively elected by themselves. There were twelve guilds who regarded themselves as the most ancient and influential, viz. the Grocers, the Drapers, the Fishmongers, the Goldsmiths, the Skinners, the Merchant-tailors, in whose company Edward III. did not disdain to allow his name to be enrolled, the Haberdashers, Salters, Ironmongers, Vintners, Fullers, and Clothworkers.

The number of the guilds amounted, however, in the course of time to eighty-nine, of which many have since disappeared; while the twelve already named have continued to maintain their exceptional position. In recent times they certainly often lost all direct connection with the old trade or handicraft to which they had once belonged, and became converted into mere social societies or large charitable institutions. The great wealth of some of these companies, as, for instance, the Goldsmiths, Merchant-tailors, and Fishmongers, which is chiefly dependent upon extensive landed property in England and Ireland, has in many instances been nobly applied to the foundation of hospitals or schools for learning, or to the endowment of scholarships in the universities; and the social influence of these associations has been carefully maintained and magnificently demonstrated by means of splendid annual festivals and the display of great hospitality, although perhaps it would be difficult to find among the members any one who now makes a coat, or brings his fish to market. All the members were not, however, equally entitled to exercise the high prerogatives of electing the lord mayor or the city representatives in parliament, as this privilege belonged exclusively to the so-called liverymen, who bear the livery and badges of their guild, and constitute, as it were, the select committee of their several companies. The assembly in which the guilds discussed their affairs, in their own stately guild-halls, was named a "hall-mote."

While the organs of the civic legislature had been brought into affinity with those of the country at large since the fourteenth century, the courts of justice, which had existed from an early period in the city, followed simi-

lar precedents. Thus the principal of these tribunals, the Court of Hustings, corresponded to the High Court of Chancery, wills being registered and questions of inheritance decided in there; while the Lord Mayor and Sheriff's Court had the control of the administrative business, and settled civil suits. There was one special court, which met to decide disputes arising on market-days, or among travellers and men of business, and which reminds us of the old English tendency to decide quickly and definitely, without entering into any long written or verbal consideration of the question at issue; and this was known as the Pie-powder Court, a corruption of the old French words, *pieds poudres*, the Latin *pedes pulverizati*, in which the complainant and the accused were supposed not to have shaken the dust from off their feet. Various officials of different ranks were employed at these courts, and the Lord Mayor's Court comprised at an early period chamberlains and marshals, swordbearers, keepers of the records, chaplains, and even masters of the hunt, together with many other servants, such as those who surrounded the king and the great lords of the land. The mayor, aldermen, and liverymen were careful to come forth in all the pomp and display of their ancient brightly-coloured and richly-furred dresses, at the many civic festivals, which followed one another in rapid succession through the year, or whenever they attended church, their council meetings, or their grand dinners; and still more magnificent was the display of their ponderous finery and their great wealth at the coronation or the marriage of a monarch, or when a prince, like Henry V., returned to his native land crowned with victory, or when some honoured foreign guest came to be

entertained by the city. For then the worthy civic authorities, adorned with all their grand decorations, rode forth, surrounded by halberdiers and bowmen, to meet their distinguished visitor. During the entry of the procession the royal standard and the city banners waved from every tower, while brightly coloured carpets and hangings were suspended from the lofty gable-windows of the citizens' houses. Dense was the crowd that pressed together on these occasions to look at the princely or noble guest, and to take a share in the good things and the merry shows with which, true to ancient usage, the civic authorities were wont so lavishly to entertain the populace.

From the many grandiloquent descriptions of these processions that have been preserved to the present day, we should be led to conclude that London must indeed have been the most powerful city of Europe, if its influence had been in any way commensurate with the pomp of its variously organised constitution. But it is sufficiently well known that the municipal governments in England nowhere attained the same degree of republican independence which was enjoyed by the Italian, Flemish, and German cities of the middle ages, where, nevertheless, these institutions, although constituting incomparably the most complete element in the state, were exposed to endless restrictions in regard to other sections of the nation. While London contented itself with ranking equal to a county, and with the privilege of exercising, under municipal forms, the amount of independent power which belonged to it, when considered in that character, and while it adhered closely to the nobility in the early part of the struggles for freedom by which England was agitated,

and then subsequently sided with the gentry and the commons, it never laid claim to that species of autonomy which Venice, Genoa, Nuremberg, and Lubeck had won for themselves, and by this very means bound its fate so much the more closely and beneficially to that of the entire country. The history of the English constitution shows us that there was absolutely no place for a free city, an independent self-governing republic, or even a Hanseatic League in England, where it was alike impossible for the nobility or the clergy to attain the rank of secular or spiritual princes of the land.

An important epoch in the special history of the development of the city was, without doubt, the relatively late independent participation of its citizens in the general commerce of the world. London had long occupied a position of great importance before native Englishmen shared with foreigners in the importation of the products of the different countries of Europe. The guild of the German merchants in Thames-street continued, like the Italian money-changers and bankers of Lombard-street, for centuries together, to exert a great and beneficial influence on the city and country, which in return allowed special privileges to these industrious foreigners. Traders from Flanders, the north of France and Genoa, were also permitted to take up their abode among the Londoners. In the fourteenth century, however, the spirit of native enterprise began to assume great dimensions, and instead of being sensible of these advantages London felt only the pressure of the foreign monopoly. The taking of Calais, the consequences of which had been keenly appreciated by Edward III., laid the foundation of the first English

colony; and the native traders in the staple commodities of the land now endeavoured, by means of the rapid increase of the wool-trade, to compete with all other branches of commerce. At the close of the century, the English merchant-ships had made good their entrance into the waters of the Baltic Sea, which had hitherto been carefully closed against them by the Hanseatic merchants; and the visits of Venetian galleys to the waters of Southampton were soon returned by English traders to the Mediterranean. It was no wonder, then, that all foreigners in London, but more especially the Germans, should have been looked upon, in the fifteenth century, with envy and ill-will, and that they should have been made to feel themselves in danger of losing their ancient privileges. The city that was destined to be the great commercial mart of the future, had begun to feel its own strength even before America was discovered, and before the reign of that great queen under whose rule the flag which had hitherto been all-powerful in the channel only, was daringly and triumphantly borne to the remote regions of the great continents of the east and west.

There were two small ports upon the Thames which played an important part in the history of ancient London, and which have not yet wholly disappeared. The one of these was Queenhythe, above the bridge, which continued for a long time to be the property of the crown; while the other, Billingsgate, lay lower down the river. Here all the ships which could not load or unload at the wharfs in the course of the day, were obliged to drop anchor and remain during the night; and here, too, was held a market on a great scale for

fish, salt, and corn. The lighting and weighing of the cargoes on the wharfs, where cranes and scales were always kept in readiness, were regulated according to definite rules. St. Botolph's wharf, between Billingsgate and the bridge, was designed exclusively for the convenience of passengers going up or down the Thames. The care which the civic authorities so early displayed in reference to the great water-way which was the means of bringing riches to their city, is very remarkable and well worthy of notice. In order to keep the river and the stream, which was then perfectly clear, fit to be used for brewing, baking, and other trades, it was strictly forbidden to throw the dirt of the streets, or the refuse of the slaughter-houses, into its waters; while, in the neighbourhood of the Tower, all bathing was forbidden under penalty of death, with the view of keeping the current in a proper condition. The city also enforced its ancient right of jurisdiction over the Thames from the bridge at Staines, sixteen miles up the river, down to its mouth. Ships of every kind, and of the most various and outlandish build, but none of a very large size, passed through the drawbridge, and dropped anchor close to the wharfs. They brought to the Hanseatic traders oak-beams and fir-planks, furs, dyeing-stuffs, wax, and stock-fish; while the southerners carried glass, the noble metals, silk, dried fruits, and the many precious spices and perfumes of the east. These wares did not usually remain long on their hands; for the main business of the London merchants consisted in transferring direct to definite inland markets the articles of foreign as well as native commerce, which were offered for sale at this great emporium of trade.

If we would try vividly to recall the busy life of those olden days, we must follow the sale and preparation of the principal articles of food. It is surprising how firmly and tenaciously many of these things have clung from the earliest times to the same spots. There is in the first place the cattle market, which already at the end of the twelfth century, when Fitz-Stephens wrote, was held at Smithfield, close to the north wall, from whence it has only been banished within the last few years, after much opposition and difficulty. The old monk, indeed, who was a genuine Londoner, seems to have had special delight in the sturdy pack-horses, the war-chargers, and elegant ambling palfreys which were then sold there in great numbers. Smithfield was in fact the Tattersall's of the middle ages, for thither resorted crowds of nobles and knights, who came to make purchases, or to enjoy themselves at the races, which were under the charge of a special class of jockeys. In the immediate neighbourhood were long rows of oxen and sheep of an incomparable quality, which the rich grass-lands of the eastern and southern counties supplied, while there were special pens for the pigs, which the Londoners fattened for salting. The horse market was soon compelled to yield to the necessities of the constantly increasing city. The slaughter-houses as well as the principal market for meat and poultry were close to St. Nicholas' church, in the neighbourhood of Newgate, where the traffic in these things has not yet wholly disappeared; while the name of the Poultry still reminds us of the ancient character of the locality. The prices, as well as the places and hours at which these goods were to be sold, were under strict municipal regu-

lation. Fish was at that time very generally used among the Londoners, owing to the many fast-days; and in consequence of the intrinsic goodness, variety, and cheapness both of sea and fresh-water fish, the most enormous quantities were consumed. The Stocks-Market,* which stood nearly upon the ground occupied in the present day by the Mansion House, and where on definite days a market was held alternately for the sale of meat and of fish, formed, as it were, the central point for this important article of diet, from whence numerous smaller places of sale, in different parts of the town, and more especially in the great thoroughfares, were supplied. Special care was taken to prevent every species of deception and fraud. Thus, no one was permitted to buy a cargo from a vessel before it had cast anchor, nor could a ship-load be brought on shore by night, as it was required that everything should be exposed for sale openly and by daylight; and great severity was practised in trying to guard against every kind of fraud in regard to the just measure, and the freshness of the goods. The millers and bakers were subjected to a similar supervision, for owing to the great demand for the articles in which they dealt, and the ready profits which they gained, they were frequently induced to practise the worst forms of adulteration. The bakers indeed, it would appear, had a special hole in their kneading-troughs, by means of which they were able adroitly to purloin the bread of their customers. The millers were obliged to measure their corn before it was ground, and again after it was converted into flour,

* So called from the Stocks, which stood there.

before the eyes of the customers, to prevent the meal-bags being filled with chaff. The pillory, and still more severe punishments, were directed against all who practised such modes of cheating, and every precaution was taken to secure the proper preparation of the admirable white bread of which London could boast as early as the fourteenth century, and to enforce that it was offered for sale, at the markets and at the open booths, of the proper weight, and at the price prescribed by the authorities.

The directions of the magistracy were at that time of a very circumstantial nature, and the constant supervision which was exercised by the common council and the guilds had the effect of limiting the sale of certain goods to definite spots, and of circumscribing different trades within the limits of special streets. Thus, for instance, those who wished to buy wood or any other kind of fuel, had to betake themselves to Cornhill; while sea-coal as it was then called, was sold direct from the boats in Sea-coal Lane, on the Fleet river. It was long before this kind of fuel became general, and Edward I. interdicted its use on account of the smoke to which it gave rise while his Queen lay in childbed in the Tower. The many woollen goods which constituted some of the principal articles of export, and whose preparation and dyeing occupied several trades, were chiefly to be bought in the churchyard by Woolchurch; the grocers were to be found in Soper's-lane, and the furriers in Skinner-street; undressed skins were only to be purchased in Friday-street, while the dealers in leather displayed their goods, which were often exceedingly beautiful, in several different streets. A special class of persons,

known as the Fripperers, provided the poor with old clothes, after the Jews had been banished from the country at the close of the thirteenth century; but they, like their predecessors, were obliged to submit to many vexatious restrictions in regard to the choice of their place of business, and the amount of examination to which their goods were subjected.

Special points of attraction for the public were then, as at all other times and in all other places, the taverns, eating-houses, ale-booths, and wine-vaults, each of which was required to be kept as far as possible distinct from the others. The inns at which people could find entertainment for their servants and horses could only be kept by citizens; and there is an ordinance extant, which prohibits the licence from being granted to natives of Portugal or Germany. The landlord was answerable for the conduct of his guests, who were regarded as aliens, and as such beyond the protection of the civic jurisdiction. He was enjoined to take from them whatever weapons they might carry upon their persons, and to insist upon their returning at an early hour in the evening. On the other hand, he was not to sell food or drink to any one besides his guests; and his charges for these articles or for lodging and fodder were not to exceed the sum fixed by the authorities. Fitz-Stephens even in his day wrote in ecstasies of the different eating-houses, and one of these which he describes, on the river near Thames-street, never lacked busy customers, and had many wine-drawers ready to serve the guests. There, too, were to be found smoking hot roasted and boiled meats and poultry;

"Rybbs of befe, both fat and ful fyne,"

as the old ballad has it, from which the hungry workmen could cut to their hearts' content, when they rested here, for a while, from the labours of the day. At a later period we meet with these pastelers' or cooks'-shops in different parts of the city, in accordance with the increased wants of the population.

Ale and beer have always been known as favourite beverages of the old English and Germans, but to judge of the descriptions that have reached us of the mode of their preparation and use in the middle ages, they could scarcely have attained any great excellence. The beer was very poor, and must have been rather a refreshing than an intoxicating drink, and this may, perhaps, account for the enormous quantities in which it was consumed; although the aldermen watched with special strictness that it consisted of the right ingredients, and of the strength prescribed by law. The breweries and their internal arrangements were still on a very small scale, and the whole business was held in low esteem. The trade of selling beer was in the hands of the ale-wives, who congregated together, more especially in Fleet-street, where almost every other house was an ale stall. The retail wine-business was, however, in very different hands, and was held in much higher repute. The amount of wine of every kind that was imported and consumed was, indeed, enormous. The English possessions in the south of France yielded the best red and white wines. The Cologne members of the German guild possessed letters patent, granted by Henry II., for importing Rhenish wine into England and retailing it; and frequent mention is made, by the writers of the middle ages, of Spanish, Italian, and even Greek wines,

including Malmsey and the wine of Crete. The unloading and drawing off of the wine, and its retail in vessels made according to a prescribed gauge, and the low prices at which this beverage continued to be sold, were all determined by fixed regulations, which were modified or renewed from time to time. It was also strictly prohibited to sell both sweet and acid wines, or Spanish and Rhenish wines, at one and the same place; a prohibition which was intended, as far as possible, to prevent fraud and adulteration. The drinking of wine was very general, and drunkenness only too common; for even Fitz-Stephens, who boasts so much of the good morals and habits of his fellow-citizens, was of opinion that, besides the many fires which were constantly occurring on account of the wooden houses which the city still contained, there was another great plague in London, namely, excessive and foolish drinking. It can scarcely be supposed that this evil habit abated during the next few centuries, for such an assumption is decisively refuted by the great number of the wine-shops, which were distinguished, more especially in Eastcheap, by being surmounted by a long iron rod, to which was suspended a green bush, which, in defiance of the prohibitions of the police-inspectors, very often projected far into the street. Among the three taverns which, according to an ordinance of Edward III. were alone permitted to retail sweet wine, there is express mention made of one in Eastcheap, which probably, even then, was known as the Boar's Head. The scenes that were enacted there in the fifteenth century, when merry Prince Hal resorted thither for his cup of sack, are described in a humorous poem of that age, known

as "The London Lack-penny." According to this composition, a poor miserable wretch comes to town to try to get justice done him in some lawsuit, but he soon finds that without money one can do nothing either with barristers or judges; and with a weary heart he trudges on his way from Westminster to the city. Cries of "Hot peascods! Strawberry ripe! Cherries in the rise! Mackerel! Oysters!" are shouted into his ears right and left, as he passes along the booths of Cheapside, where all sorts of people and things are jostled and crowded together, and where every article of wearing apparel, from velvet and silk to homespuns and yarns, is offered for sale. But he has no money, and can buy none of these fine things; nay, he even sees his own hood, which was stolen from his neck in the throng in Westminster Hall, hanging up in Rag-fair. When he comes into Eastcheap, the landlord of a tavern rushes forth, and pulling him by the sleeve, cries, "Come, sir, and try our wine!" What a bustle and confusion is here! One is crying, "Roast-beef!" another, "Pies!" while all around there is a violent clattering of tin jugs and platters. Then, besides, some are playing the harp, some the bagpipes, and some are singing. One is calling, "Yea, by cock!" another, "Nay, by cock! while some are singing, for money, of Jenkin and Julian. The poor country wight is, however, heavy at heart, and cries: "But for lack of money I might not speed."

The beer and wine shops must naturally have given occasion to much rioting and disturbance; and on this account it was enacted that they must all be closed when the evening-bell was rung. At that time the watchmen appointed by each ward came on duty, and went their

beat through the streets, carrying long poles, from which were hung pots of burning tar, which afforded the only light with which the streets were supplied. All brawlers, drunkards, and vagabonds, as well as women of ill-repute, who in the fourteenth century came principally from Flanders, if they could not secure a refuge in their many hiding-places on either side of the river, were seized upon by the armed watch, and locked up in the cells at the gates, or in the Tun, a jail in Cornhill. There was no lack of rioting and dissipation, which at times gave rise to serious disturbances. The lowest classes, although they no longer revelled in their original licence, were still rude and unpolished; and among them stood foremost the numerous apprentices, skippers, carriers and waggoners, who seem to have been specially noted for making disturbances without cause. It became, however, a very serious matter when, as sometimes happened, they were led on by feelings of envy or revenge to attack the Guildhall of the Hanseatic League; and an almost communistic fanaticism seems even to have overpowered the masses in 1381, and again in 1450, when rebels from the country remained for a few days masters of the city. At that time the magistrates could neither save their homes nor their property by means of their own police, or any of the powers at the command of the civic authorities; and they were obliged to receive aid from the nation, the crown, and the nobles. Such events as these happened, however, very seldom, and never, unless from some deep-seated cause. The people in the meanwhile retained their amusements, and as long as they did not disturb the community, were suffered to indulge in their favourite habit of drinking,

and taking part in the disturbances to which those habits frequently gave rise.

The sports, which varied with the season of the year and the festivals of the Church, were entered into, not only by the young, but by persons of riper age. Fitz-Stephens, who seems to have had a marvellous taste for such things, relates that on Shrove Tuesday boys were allowed free licence, and might amuse themselves in their schoolrooms with cockfighting. Football and quoits were even at that period favourite recreations, and in winter-time the ribs and jaw-bones of oxen were made to do duty as skates for those who amused themselves upon the ice on the city moats, or at Moorditch. The young men of London exercised themselves at tilting, as did the youth of the nobility; and at Easter time, instead of jousting on horseback, they took a boat, and indulged in a doubly dangerous manner in this exciting sport upon the Thames, while the worthy burghers, with their wives and daughters, looked on from the bridge and the wharfs. The city had its own woods and fields for hunting, shooting, and hawking; and Edward IV., who made frequent demands upon the purses of the Londoners, had no scruple in inviting to his royal hunts the worthy aldermen of the city, with the ladies of their families, for whom this handsome and affable prince often showed special regard, and who, on these occasions, were often regaled by their gallant host with Muscadine wine and venison. Shows of the miracles and Mysteries were not wanting in the olden times; and we find frequent notices and descriptions of these great representations, which were under the management of the monastic clergy. In the year 1391, and

again in 1409, such shows seem to have made a great impression on the minds of the people; but these representations of the lives of the saints, and exhibitions of buffoonery, had not yet grown into the modern theatre; and, on the spot where Shakespere afterwards acted, bull-fights and bear-baiting were still decidedly the most popular forms of entertainment.

It must have been very difficult under such a pressure of mere animal and material life, and in the midst of so much natural energy and activity, for mental culture to make its way in London. The city had been long sensibly in want of schools, and the old monk of Canterbury can only tell us of three, viz. the foundation schools of St. Paul's and Westminster, and of Bermondsey, across the water. Under the poor, imbecile Henry VI., who always retained a warm feeling for the young, and who has immortalized his name by the two great institutions of Eton and of King's College, Cambridge, there were nine grammar schools established in London. It would appear that the beneficed clergy, among whom even in those days there were many able preachers, made every exertion, not, however, without being influenced by the violently persecuted doctrines of Wiclif, to provide the young with better instruction. A generation later, the study of the classics, moreover, gained a footing in London; for, before the Reformation, John Colet, Dean of St. Paul's, a native of London, and the friend of Erasmus, founded the school that was also named after the cathedral.

In conclusion, it will scarcely be out of place—although we have already touched upon the subject at various points—once more to consider the ways and means by which order and a regular mode of government

were maintained at the close of the middle ages among the population of this constantly increasing city, which, however difficult it may be to determine such numbers, can scarcely be computed at less than a hundred thousand souls. The authorities, consisting of the mayor and his council, governed the whole; whilst the aldermen had everything to manage for their respective wards by means of bailiffs, beadles, and other officials. The king and parliament enacted various laws for the city of London, which were applied and observed with that respect for the laws of the land which is peculiar to the English character. The number of laws promulgated either in the form of statutes or ordinances, appears almost incredible in the present day; but still more surprising is the endless and minute individualization of these regulations; for we can no longer comprehend how entire classes of the population should have allowed themselves to be restricted to the use of certain kinds of food and of a prescribed number of dishes, or to a fixed shape and material in regard to their clothes. Nor can we now comprehend how an alderman or his officials should have had to watch how often the citizens in his ward were to be shaved, and how often their hair or their nails ought to be cut. Men, even if they belonged to a good family, must have found themselves fettered, in the midst of much licence, by numerous restrictions which would be insufferable to us. If, however, we look at things as they really were, we shall everywhere find a rude state of nature, both in regard to trade, social intercourse, and domestic relations, which made these severe prohibitions necessary, and their still more severe enforcement unavoidable.

There were two objects which were regarded as of special importance and paramount interest by the citizens of London, viz. that the great traffic of the city should be kept free from all disturbing causes of interruption, and that the health of the population should be preserved by every possible means. Both these objects are apparent in the regulations issued by the inspectors of streets. The streets were, at an early period, carefully paved, and the attendant expenses met by the imposition of a toll on carriages, on ships lying in the ports, unless they belonged to owners having special immunities, and on waggons passing through the gates, if they were loaded either with sand or clay, or with corn, meal, or firewood. Every house-owner was, however, compelled to contribute to the repairs of the common thoroughfares, which, like the entrances to the cellars and the sale-booths, which were so frequently attached to the houses, were regulated by the authorities. There were to be gutters in all the streets, connected with the admirable water-works and the sewers, whose origin is unquestionably to be referred to the Romans. There are innumerable ordinances extant in respect to the maintenance of cleanliness in the streets, and not only was every householder to sweep before his door, but there was a band of special functionaries appointed to remove all accumulations of dirt or rubbish which might occasion annoyance, or be regarded as a nuisance. These men were also especially charged to see that the pigs never left their sties to wallow in the mud, or to wander at large in the streets. There was, however, an exception made in favour of the hospital of St. Anthony, the patron saint of these animals, for the

swine belonging to this house had bells suspended to their necks, and must have been held in great consideration, as they were not suffered either to be taken or killed. Stray dogs did not fare any better, but even in their case there was an exception made in favour of the so-called noble dogs, *chiens gentils*, which were the property of noble masters. The great people of the country, such as the nobles, prelates, and barons, many of whom lived in the city, and maintained relations of intimacy with the citizens, were treated with great consideration by the civic authorities. Thus the prohibition against making purchases before the appointed hour at the great fish, meat, and bread markets, was relaxed or, perhaps, covertly remitted in the case of nobles and their servants; and they, moreover, were the only persons not debarred from carrying swords and shields, or wearing masks at the great entertainments which took place at the seasons of Christmas and the New Year. The city had, however, early endeavoured to secure itself against the aggressions of the crown by obtaining royal letters patent from the different monarchs; thus, before the claim was abrogated in regard to country districts, the city obtained immunity from the imposition by which the court had been wont to keep their men and horses free from charge; and, in accordance with the exemption which they secured, it became illegal to exact lodging, money, or food from the citizens. On one occasion, when the marshal and chamberlain of Edward II. had caused several houses to be scored with chalk, as a mark that they were to receive billets of men and horses, the sheriff immediately ordered the marks to be effaced, and when he was called to account for his conduct

before a royal tribunal, which sate in the Tower, he was acquitted. There was even a law passed under Edward I. which secured to the house-owner the ancient privilege of allowing him, in the event of his slaying a royal servant under the provocation of such enforced billeting, to free himself from the charge of murder on the oath of six of his gossips.

The punishments in the ancient city of London were summary, but by no means excessively hard or cruel. They consisted mainly in imprisonment, as is sufficiently proved by the large number of jails, in fines of money, expulsion from the city, the pillory, whipping, and having the head shaven; and were all directed against acts of immorality, which were only too frequent both amongst the clergy and laity; against the frauds practised by members of several of the guilds; against slander, cheating, and adulteration, disturbance of the peace and rebellion. The lord mayor was happily not invested with the power of inflicting the punishment of death; and when this had been awarded in the year 1340, in consequence of a riot and a fight between the fishmongers and skinners, the king only allowed this exceptional case to pass in consequence of the lord mayor having been entrusted with special powers during his own absence in Flanders.

We see, therefore, how early, in the middle ages, London presented the aspect of a compact and exclusive community, which was distinguished by a genuine English character of staunch resolution, but was not actuated by any very deep intellectual aspirations, nor possessed of much appreciation or taste for the arts. The Londoners, in fact, were a practical, material people, deeply impressed by their own important political character.

They had already become conscious of their own strength and influence, although they never forgot that while they exercised powers which in some respects were without a parallel, they nevertheless constituted a portion of one great whole. Even when, at a subsequent period, England once tried a republican form of government, London never rose to be more than the first city of the land. Its reputation, magnitude, and influence in regard to the rest of the world have, of necessity, increased with the importance of the empire; and who can say when this increase will have reached its final height? Prophecies have indeed been rife for more than two hundred years that the summit of its power has been attained, and that a retrogression from its high position is inevitable: but how long will such prophecies continue to be equally far from their fulfilment?

THE END.

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